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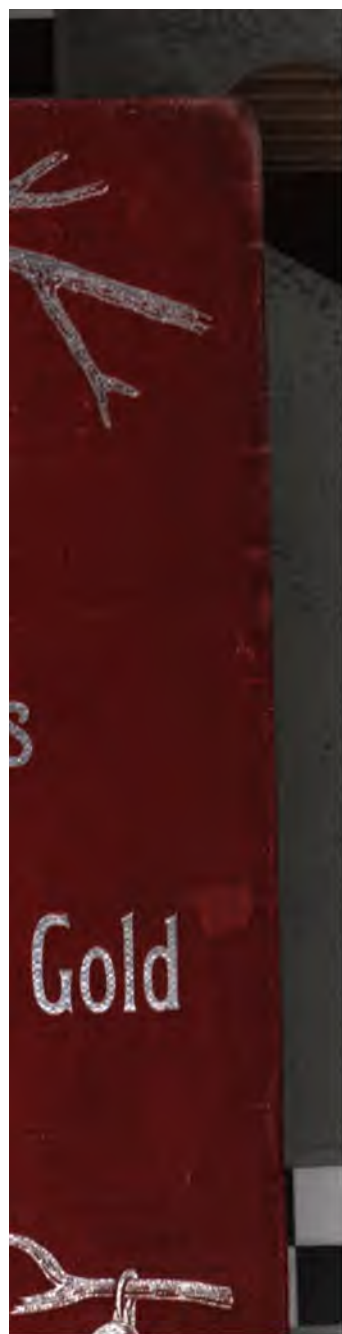
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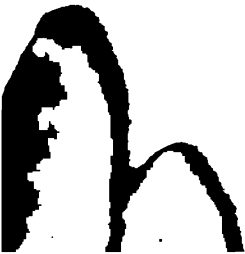
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(Supplement)



**MATIN
BELLS
AND
SCARLET
AND
GOLD.**







James W. Collins



1937

1937

1937

ALL 2712



MATIN BELLS
AND
SCARLET AND GOLD.

By
"F. HARALD WILLIAMS," B.A., OXFORD, O.T.

Author of "*Women Must Weep*," Fourth Edition
(*Semina eternitatis*, Abp. of Armagh);
"*Under the Sword*," "*Baby Pilgrims*," and "*Confessions of a Poet*."

[FIRST EDITION.]



1897.

THE
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Fifteen, Victoria Street,
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TO MY WIFE.

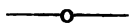
I picked these blossoms by the way,
Which yet have something of the morn—
A blush, a perfume, that may stay :
I give the flower, I keep the thorn.



1



Matin Bells and Scarlet and Gold.



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2. *Apologia pro Arte Meâ* (Prologue).



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Dedication.

COOING TIME.

We two are getting gray and old
And in the yellow leaf,
And soon will come the evening time,
When falling shadows wax more cold,
And harvest bells to service chime,
To carry home the sheaf;
But both have drunk of pleasure's fount,
And had our happy loves,
Nor do we grudge to give account
Of duty, as is done by all ;
For though we droop, we can recall
The cooing time of doves.

Dear wife, thou never canst look old,
Nor feeble is thy tread
To one who reads the changeless truth,
And knew thy morning's radiant mould ;
For I do see eternal youth,
Behind the sweet grey head.
And I remember when a boy
I touched thy tiny gloves,
And found a new and undreamed joy
In kissing them, and still I hear
Across the gulf of many a year,
The cooing time of doves.

Sweetheart, our feelings are not old,
Nor find the growing gloom ;
The sunrise yet is on thy hair,
Thy brow is innocently bold,
I mark the bud which promised fair
In thy calm autumn bloom.

And though we reaped our bitter share,
The angry shouts and shoves
Which wedded us again in care,
We had each other's conscious ken,
And treasured on unharmed by men,
The cooing time of doves.

But if thy roses must get old,
And gather of the shade
Which may not hurt our better part,
It's but the severing from the gold
Of earthly dross, and hand and heart
Together do we fade.

Alight we hold the ancient flame
Which warmed our early loves,
Our mingled hopes are just the same,
And life in waking or in sleep
Abideth one, and now we keep
The cooing time of doves.





Prologue.

— — —

APOLOGIA PRO ARTE MEÂ.

Others ask me why I sing
In the shine and shadowing
 Night and day,
 On my way,
With my hand upon the string ;
 I will say,
 I will say—
Just because it is my way ;
Not that everywhere I mark,
 As I may,
In the dawning and the dark
Of green earth and scarlet sky,
 Mystery,
 Mystery,
And a strange immortal spark,
In the clod as in the planet,
Glowing since its God began it ;
Not that ever more I see
 All around,
 All enwound,
Blade of grass and honey bee,
Butterfly and blasted tree,
 As I strike
On my lute strings, all alike,
With the margin of a bliss
Sweeter than the Father's kiss,
And a terror's black abyss,
 Madly blent
 In a white
Fire of holy wonderment—
 Infinite,
 Infinite.

This I do behold in all,
In the bridal and the pall,
 Smile and tear,
 Life and death,
Shriek of tempest, baby's breath—
Noting beauty, joy and fear,
 In the wooing
 Of the love,
 And the cooing
 Of the dove,
 In the birds,
That their little duties ply,
 Winged words,
If they only call and cry ;
 As in Nature,
 At full stature,
With her grand hypocrisy.
Some do flout my silver song,
Deem it tedious, deem it long,
Deem it over smooth and weak,
 With its purling
 Course and curling
Circuits through all lands and times,
With the messages I speak
In my own too rapid rhymes.
But I dare not, cannot stay
 Though in play
 Once, to linger
 With a rose
 Or a poppy,
 When a finger
Mars its redness or repose,
And I tamely will not copy
What my heart does not disclose.
I must go my easy way,
And my own true teaching say,
Though a thousand thunder nay
 Or condemn
 And condemn
All my many tinkling notes

And see nothing still but motes
In my every rhyme or ray—
Just because it is my way,
 Is my way,
 Is my way.
For indeed I know no other
 Better plan,
And I never had a brother,
 Born of man.
And my heart yet will not smother
Music learnt of winds and brooks,
 (Not of books)
And must warble what it can.
Others yield to custom's tie,
Rest in any silken lie—
I must sing, or I shall die.
Is it instinct or obtuseness,
 Art or shoddy,
 Fraud or truth,
But I do believe in body,
And the rich and ripe profuseness
Of a warm, full blooded youth,
 Plump and real,
Not a marble cold ideal.
And exuberance in woman
Never yet has found a foeman,
 Never will,
 Never shall,
At the fast or festival,
In the fight or funeral,
While old love retains the skill
 Chief in woman,
And the beating heart is human.
Ah, abundance is no fault ;
 Its totality
(Not a swinish animality
Where we are agreed to halt)
 Is its favour
 And its beauty,
And without it were as salt

Which has lost its saving savour
And its duty.
The diffuseness of my song
Does no wrong,
Has no harm,
Is its glory and its charm,
Is its beauty and its strength,
And the ease that comes at length
(Only late,
Fair as fate)—
Is the final grace of art,
And perfection of each part
With the flowering of the heart ;
Though this power,
In the hand
Not accustomed to command
Or to prune,
May be still a deadly dower
And make discord in the tune.
If my singing errs as such,
Is too much,
'Tis because I love the latitude
Of the boundless air and sea
And the rolling prairie lea,
Not one attitude
Stiff and starved,
As if carved
Out of stone,
Nor one tone ;
I want room wherein to range
Up and down
Field and town,
Chance and change,
Ocean billows
Where the petrels hang and play,
Purple pillows
In the old night's starry day.
As the moorland breezes blow,
Breezes blow
Over miles of fragrant heather,

Where the blue bells nod together ;
 As the rippling waters flow,
 Waters flow,
 Through the pastures' daisied sweep
 To the deep,
 To the deep ;
 As the birdies wave their wing
 And make woods with music ring,
 Music ring,
 In an ecstasy of trust,
 All and each because they must ;
 So I sing,
 So I sing,
 In the poetry of trust,
 For I must,
 For I must.
 Passion like a leaping fire,
 Tears that start
 From my heart,
 Heaven's delight and earth's desire,
 Bid my art
 Play a part,
 Seize its lute and strike the strings,
 Till the sleeping thoughts and things
 Which of miracle partake
 Born in melody awake—
 Lisping leaves,
 Rustling sheaves,
 Brooks that babble,
 Girls that dabble
 Feet of snow in kissing waves
 Falling at those feet like slaves.
 Blushing roses'
 Red reposes,
 Lilies' anguish
 As they languish,
 Bleeding under
 Bees that plunder
 Them of gold
 They withhold,

And the yellow nectar dust,
Unto which they climb and cling,
These I worship, these I sing,

For I must.

For I must.

O, the method is the man—

Is the man,

And I cannot change my plan

Foul or fair,

For it is the very air

Which I breathe,

And wherein my fancies wreath

Or array themselves in light,

And in shade ;

Nor in borrowed robe or right,

Would I ever, if I might

With false trappings masquerade.

Yes, my manner

Is my banner,

It means more,

It is *I*.

Whether darkly soaring high,

Or with vague and venturous prow

On a far untravelled shore,

Touching, just to pay some vow

As no pilgrim paid before ;

Dropping now

Into coy forbidden nooks,

Where no prying sunbeam looks.

Well I know there may be others,

Sisters, brothers,

Who uplift a loftier voice

And possess a larger choice,

And in liberty rejoice

To be silent or to sing.

I am one,

Who have none ;

But, as blossoms in the spring

At the waft of warmer air

And new times,

Rush to resurrection fair,—
 So my spirit chants and chimes
 And upon the sunbeam stair
 Romps in rhymes
 To and fro,
 As the living currents go,
 Ever bound to sing and fly
 From a sweet necessity.
 Others wander as they will,
 As they will,
 Like the straying of a stream
 Now in vigil, now in dream,
 With the pride of scornful skill,
 Through the vista of the valley,
 Here asleep, there with a sally
 Rioting,
 Murmuring
 Musically,
 In the most approved of measure,
 At their pleasure.
 But they feel no higher law
 Than their own,
 Not the awe
 Of the unseen and unknown
 In the study of a straw,
 And bestrown
 With the stardust, and the grace
 Like a world
 All upcurled
 In a tiny dewdrop's face ;
 And for their capricious course
 They admit no deeper source
 Than some dim,
 Devious whim,
 Not a budding revelation's
 Obligations.
 But I hear the calling, calling
 And I feel the thralling, thralling
 Of the Powers
 Sweet as flowers,

Soft as showers
On green bowers,
Drawing, guiding,
Cheering, chiding,
With a beautiful revulsion
From this vulgar rack and wrong,
By a dear supreme compulsion,
Flooding me with silver song
And a glamour and a glow,
Till the flame
Without name
Must in music overflow.
What the secret Voices fling
From their lonely sacred summits,
What the Silences may bring
Deeper than the deepest plummets,
Mirth and madness,
Love and sadness,
Tears of gladness,
Mist on mountains,
Fire of fountains,
God Refiner,
Man diviner,
Breasts that no man
Kissed on woman,
Insect's wing,
Lips of scarlet,
Hair all starlit,
Uncrowned king,
These I sing,
These I sing.
Others step aside and play
By the way
Night and day ;
Others yield to lower lust,
Baser strife,
Wallowing in din and dust
And red wrong
Loved too long ;
But the point of passion's knife



PROLOGUE.

25

Never more allowed to rust,
At my breast
With unrest
But anointed,
Still is pointed.
And I own the stormy gust,
As I feel the yearning strong,
Ripe and rife,
With a doubt sublime as trust ;
While the singing is my life,
And the living is my song,
So I babble *what I must*,
What I must,
What I must.



SECTION I.

White Magic.

WHITE MAGIC.

Take, O take the magic bowl,
Feed it with most lovely things,
Tears and laughter that will shake the very rafter,
Echoing on in the hereafter,
Light of lilies and the soul
Of our hidden spells and springs,
And the death-bell's passing toll
With the waft of angel wings ;
Mix them kindly, mix them madly, dumbly, blindly
With the moonlit dew that rest,
And the red so unconfin'dly
Sleeping on the rose's breast.

Take, O take a virgin heart
From the baby as it dreams
Of its mother and the kisses rained that smother
Lips responding to no other ;
Mingle it with masons' art,
Deft to catch the morning gleams,
White on turrets as they start
Upward like embodied beams ;
Throw in buttercups and daisies, and the shutter
Dropt by shadows when they fall,
Mirth and melodies that utter
Pain within the woof of all.

Take, O take the lambent fire,
And the cunning flowers of frost
Dimly painted on the windows as if sainted
And for evermore untainted ;
Blend them with the marriage tire
Of a maiden loved and lost,

And ineffable desire
For the pathway yet uncrost ;
Freely scatter snow, and honeyed words that flatter
Fools and still have something true,
Grace of children and their chatter,
And a blessed rift of blue.

Take, O take from clouded skies
Thunder, and of purple air
Bloom and winning charms from breezes all
a-spinning
Webs that break and keep beginning ;
Add to colour where it lies
On the cheek and haunting hair
Of a woman's sorceries,
Innocent that she is fair ;
Join to clamour of the strife that secret glamour
Softening low the steps of lust,
And on waves that stir and stammer
Cast a handful of gray dust.

WHITE WINGS—A THEOPHANY.

There was silence in the city, there was silence on the
lea
When that fateful voice went forth
Through the night, into the north,
And the leaves that made a music like the murmur of
the sea,
As in sounds of solemn worth
Rode the White Wings on the stillness that responded
to their plea ;
For that vision
With decision
Cut the vapours, as they hung
Like a curtain
In uncertain
Light, and as a censer swung ;
And the oaring of those White Wings was a wonder to
the eye,

While they voyaged grandly on
As of old in Babylon,
With a message for the earth life, and a mission from
the sky,
That reached out into the future, and reached back
across the past,
Calling man of peace and slayer
From their slothful dreams to prayer
And the holy preparations of the vigil and the fast—
“O ye sinners who transgress,
Come to penance and confess,
And your evil deeds redress,
While the door of grace is open and the hours of mercy
last.”

And beneath the ancient belfry in the shadow of the
tower,
With the magic of the moon
And its candle, that would soon
Be extinguished by the sun-blaze as it burst again in
flower,
Death was waiting for its boon
And a quiet resurrection when the White Wings gave
it power;
For the mortal
From its portal
Then once more in beauty broke,
And the sleeping
Graces keeping
Their long trysting-time awoke;
As they heard that cry of ages, in their centuried
retreat
And their fellowship with dust,
Which aroused the quickening trust
And the seed of everlastingness that could not own
defeat;
While it robbed the grave of victory, and took from fear
the sting,
Calling through the earthly layer,
“O ye corpses, come to prayer,

For your trance is but a trouble that will final glory
bring
To the darkness of the clods,
And the winter rains like rods,
Ye shall yet up spring as gods,
And those crumbling frames be crowned with delight—
arise and sing ! ”

But the White Wings seemed to order me to follow as
they flew,
As they floated like a cloud
Which was shaping in a shroud
Some new miracle of life, that of the mist and starlight
grew,
Till the night wind waxing proud
Of the marvel and the mystery its gentle trumpet blew ;
And a whisper
Clear and crisper,
As it gathered of all good
From the numbers
And the slumbers
Of the water and the wood,
Like the speaking of the Universal Spirit fell on me ;
And it kindled me like fire,
With an infinite desire,
And those White Wings seemed a symbol of the better
things to be ;
While it trembled on my heart-strings like a finger
on a lute,
Calling doers and the sayer
To the awful shrine of prayer,
Where the shining walls are worship and the shouts of
passion mute,
“ O ye peoples of the lands
Come with praises in your hands
That will wash away the brands,
And array you in the righteousness of the Divine
repute.”
Thus I seemed to flit for ages over map-like sea and
shore,

And uncharted earth and sky,
Where the White Wings rustled by
With the burden of the warning that to every clime
they bore,
As from old eternity,
While the dry bones stirred behind them and the
heavens flamed out before ;
And I pondered
As I wandered
Through the chambers of the air,
Would my travel
Now unravel,
The dark riddles of despair ?
But none answered, though I followed the one watch-
man of the night,
As he uncompanied sped
On his task unpiloted
In the dreadfulfulness of twilight and his ministering
flight ;
And a ghostly presence bathed me in a rapture more
than bliss,
Calling drudge alike and player
To the marriage feast of prayer,
When before the sob of penitence comes absolution's
kiss—
“ O ye sinners, who are lost
Or by gusts of craving tost,
The grim border can be crost,
And the White Wings yet shall carry you safe o'er the
black abyss.”

And now ever when the evening falls and owls begin to
sweep
On their broad majestic vans,
With another way than man's,
I go sailing with the White Wings through the spaces
dim and deep,
And decipher the dark plans
Of the margin of the mysteries that haunt the worlds
of sleep ;

And no stigma
Of enigma
Now is bitter as of old,
And rare petals
Like rich metals
In the silent hours unfold ;
I go sailing with those White Wings over mountain,
moor and dale,
Over forest, fields and brooks
Which to me are open books,
And they sigh to me their secrets of the far and future
tale ;
But the Voice proclaims its teaching to the inward up-
turned eye,
Calling pilgrim soul and stayer
To themselves in solemn prayer,
While the Vision gives them seeing of the sacred
euphrasy,
“ O ye dead at length upstart,
And ye thoughts that death impart
From the white and new-washed heart
Take its colour, till each skeleton is a theophany.”

WHITE ROSE.

There it lay in the terrible slough of the slums,
There it lay in the gutter and mire,
And it burned with the beauty of fire
That repelled the rude grasp of the envious thumbs,
And hard fingers that quarrelled with dogs for mere
crumbs,
But shrunk back from one dainty desire ;
There it lay
In broad day,
A white rose,
That looked bigger and brighter,
And fairer and whiter
Because of its muddy repose.

How it came in that squalid and pestilent gloom,
With its message of mercy and light
For the shadow more dreadful than night,
No one knew as they gazed at the delicate bloom
All askance when they passed to the sin and the doom,
Though they felt and they hated their blight ;
No one knew
Where it grew,
Whence it dropt,
As it seemed to wax sweeter
And blossom completer,
But no one to gather it stopt.

There it lay in the thick of the horror and shame
Like a challenge from heaven sent down,
To the drab with her mud-spattered gown
And the creature unsexed, and but woman in name ;
While to each it seemed different – awful as flame,
A reproach, or the glimpse of a crown ;
There it lay
On their way,
A white rose,
Just like silvery metal,
No stain in a petal,
As if it had more to disclose.

Now and then some went slower and almost stood still,
A rough child that if tended were fair
With the halo not fled from his hair
Which the angels had fondled, before his blind will
In the darkness around him as comrade chose ill,
Or a girl with yet innocent air ;
But none could,
And none would
Venture quite
For a moment to linger
Or touch with a finger,
That purity dreadful and white.

Till at last from the mob and the misery crept
A lame girl with the glory of fears,
And the jewels of penitent tears ;

While virginity that had so long in her slept,
Now awoke as from dreams, and in melody leapt
 To the early desire of the years ;
 Sweet and low
 In the glow
 Of delight,
Down she knelt with her meanness
And conscious uncleanness,
That turned a sick bloom to the light.

With a thrill of unworthiness flushing her face,
 Then she guiltily thrust in her breast
 The strange prize that in passion was prest ;
And the freshness with all its ineffable grace
In a moment came back to her tender embrace,
 As a homing shy bird to its nest ;
 There it grew,
 There it blew,
 As with those
Who are true to their nature
And rise to full stature,
With roots in her heart—the White Rose.

WHITE WORDS.

There was worship in heaven and wonder on earth
 When the white queen of purity spoke,
And the pauper forgot all the bondage of dearth,
 While the ashes leapt up and awoke,
 As they broke
 Into beauty and blossom of fire ;
 The dead hearts renewed ancient desire,
 And wan maidens their snowy attire ;
For her voice had the glamour and gladness of truth
 And the thoughts were themselves all in rhyme.
With the dew and delight and enchantment of youth
 And the infinite story of time.

Not the words of our wisdom the fair and the fit,
Not the speech of the reverend sage
With his splendour of learning and sparkle of wit,
In the mellowing harvest of age ;
Not a page
From the richest resultings of years ;
But a music that fell on the ears,
With the babble of song birds and tears ;
And the voice of the spirit that pierces the soul
As the arrow that goes to its mark,
And brings back to the deaf their departed control
With a murmur of morn in the dark.

From her lips flew the message of virginal life,
A new ministry breathed in old names
On the hardness and squalor of bestial strife,
And the vilest of shadows and shames ;
Winged flames,
That set animal natures aglow
With a freshness no art could bestow,
As if heaven surged up from below ;
Crystal flakes which alit on the petrified rest
With a soft'ning appeal, and were such
That they kindled at once the dull stone of the breast
Into glory and grace with their touch.

Words of hope from the depths of an infinite joy,
Like the whisper of Spring in the air,
That just seemed as they dropt to consume the alloy -
And the evil of all things not fair—
To repair
What was broken with promise of dawn,
And its colours of paradise drawn
On gray brothel as on the green lawn ;
For she spoke as a queen who has passed beyond hell
And yet carries the scorching and stain,
And has tasted all sacraments trial can tell
Being crowned with the crowning of pain.

Warm white words from the fountain of love and the
light
Freely scattered as jewels on all,

That were seeds of a manhood to come in its might,
 The auguster because of its fall
 And the pall ;
 For she uttered *herself*, and the blind
 Yet in her did their heritage find,
 And partook of that beautiful mind ;
 She came down to the sorrow and down to the sin,
 She was one with the feeble and faint,
 She revealed to the meanest the marvels within,
 And in rags the sweet aureoled saint.

Ah, they listened to her, the poor, starving and stained
 As they drank in the music of hope,
 While the captives remembered no more they were
 chained,
 And the murderer saw not the rope,
 But the slope.
 That leads up to blue roses of skies,
 As he gazed with his red rheumy eyes,
 And beheld a new Eden arise ;
 For the halt, and the maimed, and the crippled in heart
 Everyone found some quickening tone,
 A new life that sent shoots through the sickliest part
 Within each, as for each all alone.

THE COMING OF THE WHITE SOUL.

She was wrapt in a garment of snow,
 She was bathed in the beauty of fire,
 While her eyes had a heavenly glow,
 And her breath was a holy desire,
 When she came,
 Sweet as blossoms of flame,
 With a love that burned brighter than wine
 And a tenderness human, divine,
 Robing round
 In a passion profound
 All the horror and evil and shame—
 When she came.

Bravely I put my shoulder now to a humble part,
Gathering grace and bolder strength for my hungry
heart,
Till from the kindly toiling done in the common way,
Slowly the sin and soiling faded and fell away ;
While, though by tardy stages, dawned like a sunrise
sure,
Blessings not bought by wages, giving a franchise pure ;
And to my empty bosom, till it possessed the whole,
Breaking all into blossom, beautiful came the Soul.
For, as the shadow dwindled, waxed the new nature
white,
Shedding a peace that kindled happiness infinite.

THE WHITE THOUGHT.

In Mente Dei.

Hid in the mind of God beautiful there it lay,
Pure as a world untrod, shy as an opening day ;
Virginal, the White Thought brooded on joys to be,
Ravishment yet unwrought, mightiness of the sea ;
All in Divinity draped breathing of earth and sky,
Infinite and unshaped dream of Eternity.

Moved in the mind of God, wonderful as the beams
Spilled on a moonlit sod, splashed upon mountain
streams ;

Thought as refined as gold, big with most blessed things,
Seeking the meekest mould where to expand its wings ;
Yearning for outward form somewhere at last in Time,
Stronger than winter storm, soft as a silver chime.

Fed in the mind of God, craving a holy vent
Whence it might make the clod glow as the firmament ;
Thought that would roll the earth drooping with shame
and lack,

Out of its dusky dearth into a broader track ;
Sweet as the heart of a child, dim as love's refuges,
Splendid as undefil'd soul of the silences.



THE WHITE SERVICE.

Come, lay one hand upon the cross and lift one hand
to Heaven,
And swear whatever be the loss to purge out all the
heaven
Of evil from thy treacherous heart, and do a soldier's
worthy part
Unsoiled by sinful revel ;
To guard the Church, which others trod in rapine, by
the grace of God
Against the world and Devil.
Come, kneel and keep a trustful tryst from midnight to
the morning
Alone with the White Blessèd Christ in simple un-
adorning,
Within the shadow of this fane beneath the storied
blood-red pane
That breathes a brighter morrow ;
If in this ghostly place at length thy Lord may clothe
thee with His strength
And cleanse thee in His sorrow.

With all my priestly power I bid thee weep and wait
thy season,
And hold the watch our Captain did on that dark
night of treason ;
To face the banded hosts of ill with armèd breast and
iron will,
And prayers shot up like arrows.
The death-bell, it may be, will toll the sin away that
sears thy soul,
When darkness round thee narrows.
Lay down thy head and keep the tryst which saints
have kept for ever,
These hours with the White Blessed Christ by true and
strong endeavour,
In penance and the bitter woe which is the demon's
dying throe
That parts not but by rending ;

And ere the dawn upon thee shakes its shafts and sun-
rise in thee wakes,
May come the conqueror's ending.

Perchance the Lord will tarry long, or break on thee in
thunder,
And crashing with the tempest song burst the black
night asunder ;
Perchance in visits of the moon the love that lives will
meet thee soon
In bridal sweet and solemn,
And somewhere in this reverend wall will rise the dear
expected call
From cloistered depth or column.
But be thou brave and keep the tryst which all must
keep who cherish
The faith of the White Blessed Christ and for that faith
would perish ;
Perchance with calm compelling voice that makes the
saddest heart rejoice
He will descend in meekness,
Who feels for thy exceeding shame and has put on our
mortal frame
And knows each want and weakness.

Come, lay one hand upon the cross and lift to Heaven
the other,
And swear the world to thee is dross and every man
thy brother,
And thou wilt never stain thy life with brutish lust or
sordid strife
But deem thy purpose holy,
And treasure pure as linen fine thy garments by the
grace Divine
In service fair and lowly.
Come, keep the one last dreadful tryst in lonely
dedication
Apart with the White Blessed Christ to win His
consecration,

And let no anguish for the past or fear of future care
o'ercast
Thy settled great decision ;
Then shalt thou wash within the flood of His most
awful saving Blood
And thou shalt see the Vision.

WHITE HANDS.

I had a longing for white hands, that waved
In some dim land of moonlight
That knew no garish noonlight,
Where never wind of trouble roamed and raved ;
Where all was hushed and holy,
The falling leaf fell slowly,
And none for aught in that sweet plenty craved ;
Where hope sufficed to have, and will was power
And rushed in ripe fruition,
Without the long transition
Of seed and blade and bud, to perfect flower ;
I had a longing for white hands, that called for me in
evening lands.

I sought the vision of white hands, that lay
In beauty more than blessing
And peace beyond caressing,
On love as shadows on a dying day ;
That with no mortal motion
In tune with my devotion
Might for a honeyed season with me stay ;
I knew a magic virtue flowed from such,
And in a passion tender
My spirit to full splendour
Would leap beneath that soft transforming touch ;
I sought a vision of white hands, where purple waves
kissed golden sands.

I found the healing of white hands, that fell
As dew on grass at morning,
Just in their own adorning,

As gentle starlight on the city bell ;
And O the quiet rapture
Of that exceeding capture,
Which opened in my breast its hidden well !
And not by vulgar ways with sordid hire
Did I attain the wonder,
And burst my bars asunder,
I passed to it through angry flood and fire ;
I found the healing of white hands, that were to me as
God's commands.

I keep the glory of white hands, that lie
Upon my brow and bosom,
And make my being blossom
And link to love with sacramental tie ;
They come with kindly graces
From sweet and sudden places,
And build for me the home that cannot die ;
Before the dawning or when lights are low,
And owls begin to stutter,
I feel, I hear them flutter
Betwixt the earth and heaven in gloom and glow ;
I keep the glory of white hands, that bind my heart like
wedding-bands.

WHITE FEET.

Lo, they came in the darkness, they came in the grief
When my burden was heavy to bear,
In the sorrow and night that was not a relief
Nor a robe that the wretched might wear ;
They were little white feet and delicious and sweet
In the fashion of snow flakes and air,
As if silence and gloom had just burst into bloom
And a form the most winsome and fair ;
As if out of the dew and the rapture and bliss
Of the moment that never comes twice,
Love had sent me a sign that makes nothing amiss
And that cannot be bought with a price.

I was troubled and torn, and despair shut me in
To the shadow of shame and my woe
That was deeper than thought and more dreadful than
sin,

As if I had myself turned my foe ;
Then those little white feet that were maiden and meet
For the message I sought for in vain,
From the horrible husk of the death and the dusk
Came in pity and ease for my pain ;
And the curtain of blackness around me all broke
Into roses of purple and light,
And the joy at the heart of my sadness awoke
Like a morning of June in its might.

And I fancied they said to me " Follow the way
Which we tread through the travailing years,
For wherever we go there is always the day
And a golden horizon appears ! "
Then those little white feet that were holy and fleet
On the errands of kindness and care,
Went before me in love as they raised me above
The old anguish and evil I bare ;
O they were not of woman, they were not of child,
But partook of the beauties of both,
They were softer than music and never defil'd,
And with mine kept the tenderest troth.

If I doubt in the journey of life what is best,
If I step for a season aside,
Then they seem to be walking in tears on my breast
And the depths of my being divide ;
Yes, those little white feet guide me straight in the street
And in pleasure and mourning and toil,
For they cannot lead wrong and they move as to song
And they gather no blemish or soil ;
Ah, I know when I come to the border at length
Of the River that flows for us all,
They will brighten before me the gulf in their strength
And their purity—lest I should fall.

WHITE BOSOMS.

It was done, I cannot say why and where I may not tell,
Somewhere before blush of day, somehow ere the matin
bell ;
Sweet white bosoms came to me 'twixt the gleaming
and the gloom,
Wonderful and soft to see, dear and terrible as doom
In the sureness of the pureness
Which alone doth make man free, giving to the spirit
room ;
Curtained was each face from light, shrouded were the
limbs and form,
In a shadow rosy bright simply showed the rapture
warm
Swelling now to sudden flower, swooning then in secret
bliss,
With the poetry of power gathered to a crimson kiss.
All my passion, all my heart surged to meet that gentle
thing,
Thrilling through my every part till my being seemed
to sing ;
Sweet white bosoms kindly came thus into my lonely lot,
With the clearness as of flame and a splendour without
spot ;
Drawing nearer still and clearer
In the shyness more than shame, yet with love that
wavered not ;
Beckoning to something glad, something that desired
to bless
Far beyond the joys I had, in their dumb deliciousness ;
And I felt around me curl'd arms as delicate as air,
Fragrance of a finer world where is nothing but the fair.
Then the black breasts of the night which had made me
sadly err
Melted into misty flight, with a silence sinister ;
Sweet white bosoms took their place by a modest
miracle,
Breathing everywhere a grace uttered but ineffable ;

And my feelings' grand revealings
Waxed as infinite as space, in their golden crucible :
Virgin fancies, vestal thought veiled in holiest attire
Of their nakedness and wrought from delight and from
 desire,
Floated under me and round, till I seemed with throbbing
 charms
By some ecstasy enwound in all lovely women's arms.

THE WHITE LIFE.

What is the long life? What is the strong life
 Showing the clue,
 Giving their hue
Still to the stages run by the ages, written on pages
 Noble and true ?
Is it the iron arms that environ
 Natures more hard,
 Stubborn and starr'd
Over with graces of the grim traces on the sad places
 Fighting has scarr'd ?
This is not all life, this is the small life,
 Bloody and barr'd.

What is the sweet life? What the complete life,
 Beautiful, fond,
 Pointing beyond
Our little trouble past as a bubble, gone as the stubble,
 Though we despond ?
Is it the rounded lot that is bounded
 Gently by lore
 Heaping up store,
Commune with tender spirits of splendour fain to
 surrender
 Freely yet more ?
This is not brave life, this is a slave life,
 Not the real ore.

What is the pure life? What the secure life
 Making men live,
 Eager to give
Better than glory and the pale story haloed with gory
 Light fugitive?
Is it the wizened fate of the prisoned
 Saint in his cell,
 Hugging the shell
Shut on the embers left by his members' fire that
 remembers
 Weakness too well?
This cannot be life, this is not free life—
 Bible and bell.

What is the great life? What is the straight life
 Conquering ill,
 Able to fill
Hearts in each corner, grief of the mourner, doubt of
 the scorner,
 One with God's will?
It is the serving glad and unswerving
 Ever of man,
 Just as we can,
Leaving the blotted world with its spotted husks that
 have rotted,
 Spent with their span;
This is the White Life, this infinite life
 Perfect of plan.

THE WHITE BOOK.

Who shall open the Book?—First, the reveller came
With lascivious look and the shadow of shame
 And inglorious dust on his brow;
Though he reeked of the cup, yet he stoutly stood up
 Fresh from breaking the holiest vow;
And the roses that clung to his forehead and hung
 On the blighted remains of a man,
Had the vagrant and fragrant reproaching of wine

While accusing abusing of treasures divine,
And looked back to the lovelier plan ;
But the White Book remained yet as solemn and sealed,
With its joys unexplained and its rest unrevealed.

Who shall open the Book ?—The philosopher came
From his studious nook and unblotted by blame,
And his front was a thunderous throne,
While his glorious eyes shone as infinite skies
From the work that was lofty and lone ;
The imperious fire of his daring desire,
With the thoughts that had journeyed through space,
And yet travelled unravelled retreats of the truth
Gave a second unreckoned and mightier youth,
And like sunrise lay broad on his face ;
But the White Book in awe and in secret composed,
Still remained with its law and the light undisclosed.

Who shall open the Book ?—Then the moralist came
With the shepherding crook and his virtuous fame,
And the Pharisee frowned from his dress,
In his forms so secure, with decorum demure
And his dogmas no more and no less ;
But he set a cold hand like the winter's command
On the reverend tome as it lay,
With the sureness of pureness though merely on skin
If it varnished and garnished the outside of sin,
And he met a new terrible ray ;
For the White Book remained in its mystical lore,
With the sense unattained and as dark as before.

Who shall open the Book ?—Then a Pariah came,
And the passion that shook him was burning as flame—
He was ragged and troubled and torn ;
But he thirsted for love, and his gaze looked above,
Though his bosom was pierced by the thorn ;
And he knelt humbly down with the cross as his crown,
But in faith that would fashion a globe ;
And his meanness grew cleanness before those great
beams

While his craving was saving as poetry's dreams,
And his rags made the kingliest robe ;
But the White Book in power to his beautiful care
Opened out like a flower, and its burden stood bare.

THE WHITE GOD.

Out of the nor'land, under the foreland it blew,
Wind of a jubilant tone
Touching the heart that was stone,
Happily telling hope not for selling—and grew ;
Out of the south-land, warm from the drouth-land, arose
Waft of a miracle fair,
Chanted abroad in the air
Rich with its capture, breathing the rapture—repose ;
Far from the east land, mystery's feast-land, the tale
Murmured on musical strings
Measures of pageants and kings,
Speaking in wonder, waxing in thunder a gale ;
Last on the west-land, bloom of the best land, He trod
Victor in triumph and tears
Born of the yearning of years,
Great beyond seeming *the* one redeeming White God.
Pen cannot write it, fame not indite it—the truth,
How He in majesty stept
Stilling the sadness that wept,
Shedding around Him light that enwound Him with
youth ;
Wrapt in a splendour dread but as tender as sleep,
Keeping all cares as His own
Treasures though mean and unknown,
Mild as maternity, yet as eternity deep ;
Birds to the Master, waited for, faster still flew
As to the kisses of morn,
Fearing no buffet of scorn—
Outcasts of city bathed in the pity that drew ;
All that was weakness all that was meekness and shod

Humbly and shamefully here
Won a safe refuge and sphere
More than a dwelling, in the compelling White God.
Children with laughter met Him and after Him ran,
Feeling a Brother and Child
Also in Him when He smil'd,
Finding their places in His embraces and plan ;
Grandeur before Him stooped to adore Him who led
Taking its crown from Him back,
Plenty without Him seemed lack—
Dross from the metal, stain from the petal, both fled ;
Evil and sadness, mischief and madness, reproached
Shrunk in the ruin they plied,
Envy was famished and died,
Dearth that had dimly fallen and grimly encroached ;
Shades of affliction, war's malediction and rod
Melted or turned to a staff,
Gold from the sickliest chaff
Sprang at the healing of the revealing White God.



With hungry glances wild and wet
For his demand ;
And straining for the waning lamp
Whose distance mocked his troubled cry,
His rosy feet would fret and stamp—
This is a song of Gramarye.

This is a song of Gramarye—
The yellow moon
With magic gesture threw off the vesture
Of gold, and far infinity
Its dreadful boon ;
With sudden gleam,
The rapture of a white rose maiden
Brake from the glamour overladen
And bursting into silver flower
Upon a beam
Descended, pouring in bright power
A starry stream ;
And lifting through the rifting gloom,
The naked joy that flitted by,
She gathered him to her own bloom—
This is a song of Gramarye.

This is a song of Gramarye—
The heaven came down,
To make a pillow for the billow
And wrought it rich exceedingly
For godhead's crown ;
On sea and shore,
Behold, the earth not now sad-hearted
Walked with the sky, and space departed
With all the terrors of the deep,
Estranged no more,
And dazzling noon and night and sleep
Held common store ;
The nations in creation's dew
Put off their dull mortality,
And ran their courses glad and new—
This is a song of Gramarye.

NAKED NATURE.

I had a vision of an angel face ;
It came to me one magic April morning,
When every flower through every sunwashed place
Was breaking out in beauty and new grace
And put on fresh adorning,
With shy scorning ;
As if, with sudden flame and secret strife
And throbbing heart of thirst,
At last they burst
Into the glory of a greater life.
And this bright Angel face
Stept out of Space,
Which as some blue and palpitating blossom
Opened itself and showed the swelling bosom
And that white wonder of the naked form,
As soft as sleep and most divinely warm,
From the small golden head down to the feet
That trod in passion proud
Upon a cloud—
A form delicious pure and virgin sweet.
Naked, but clothed in light of coloured vesture,
And with unfathomed eyes
Like azure skies,
She stood before me with compelling gesture,
Bathed in a glow that never fell on man,
Or fairest woman
Of most perfect plan
Who gathers to her all the glories human ;
Clothed in her own bright beauty
Like a dress,
Which seemed her duty—
That great loveliness ;
All flushed with passion
That was utter purity,
She read the fashion
Of the dim futurity,
With eyes that travelled
On and on through haunted

Space and unravelled
Riddles dark, undaunted ;
Ablush with love
That played in lambent fire,
With brow above
And feet of earth's desire,
She stayed my wandering with her waving hand
Whose waving was command,
And by the glamour of her conquering look,
And lips like rosy rhymes
Telling the stories of all climes and times,
Their changes and their chimes,
And poetries of every blessed book.
But, lo, the beauty of each separate flower,
Each individual grace
Poured on her face
The writing and the rapture of its power ;
And she partook of each
Within the compass of her bright embrace,
Whate'er might gladden her exceeding dower
And living lessons teach.
But then O was it sound of laughing waters,
Or waft of summer winds
From fragrant Inds
Where star beams walk with moonlight's magic
daughters ?
A fount of music broke
From overflowing silence and the shrine
That seemed a holy shrine ;
Spirit to spirit spoke,
And I awoke
To the full stature of a strength divine.
Round me her radiant arms
In dew and fire were folded,
And I was moulded
By the deep impress of her Angel charms
To something fairer still
Than any earthly shape by sculptor skill,
And the celestial rose that was her mouth,
Laden with all the perfume of the south

And other ages gone
When larger sunlight shone,
Shed into me a tempest of vitality
And riches of reality,
And while it breathed
Upon me I was caught and carried up,
As rapt with some intoxicating cup,
And mixed with her and with her life enwreathed.

I saw
The meaning and the might of law,
The miracle and mystery
In all their history
Of all high things that harass souls of men,
Laid bare before me in the light of love
With beauty so terrifical
And bliss magnifical,
That in a flash of wonder every ken
Stood out like steps of fire to God above.
And when she laid
Voluptuous warm hands
O'erfull of passion and of utter purity
Upon my burdened brow—
And when she said
In words that with their brightness were obscurity
Unspeakable great thoughts, that ranged all lands
And seas divided by the venturous prow,
And reached through all futurity—

I was afraid.
But when she set her quickening lipson mine
In the full rapture of their rhythmic flame,
That seemed to twine
And in the shadow shine
About the hidden bases of my frame,
And mould it into something new, the same
As hers and half divine,
New courage came.
And with the glow of that creative kiss
Unclosing to me all the wells of bliss,
A voice that sounded every height
Of light,

And every deep
Where nought is made amiss
That brings the vision of the heaven called sleep,
Spoke to me of the height and the abyss.
“ For ever now thy life is sealed
And healed
Of sorrow with no morrow but the day
That tricks in suffering even the noontide ray,
And sickness with the saddening blot
Or spot
Of trouble which is double with the shame
Not less a burden if it bears no name,
A living part of human things
If wings
And flying with vain trying to the morn
So big with blossom though it gives but thorn,
Which is earth's dark exiguous lot—
A spot
Which nowise may by mortals be forgot,
And to their brightest grandeur clings
And stings.
Henceforth thine cannot be a sordid choice,
Since thou hast seen my face and heard my voice ;
But with my being thou art bathed
And swathed,
And cleansed from all the coarse and common dust
With all the keen corroding rust
Of lust,
Uplifted to the same sublimer goal
And gathered in a kindred whole
And soul,
Which blends thee with me in a kindred trust
Beyond each flitting shape and gust,
And must.
For thou hast fully seen
In all her stature
Unveiled the awful Queen
And naked Nature,
And known the secret sight
Not known to learning

But granted to the might
Of maiden yearning,
And felt my fervent lips'
Sweet palpitation
In ecstasy's eclipse
And education,
To thine in living breath
Divinely married
In rapture that were death,
If long they tarried.
And thou hast drunken deep
The mystic torrent,
And wakest not to weep
In strife abhorrent,
Washed in the quickening waves
That purge the mortal,
To others only graves,
To thee life's portal.
And now
Behold the blessed truth that turns
The lock of every riddle, on the brow
Of wrinkled age
Or writ on funeral urns
Or scarlet lips just opening the first page
Of purest passion
In its fiery fashion,
Or dimpled baby hands that clasp another's
Who one mad moment has the hungry fill
That is a mother's
Then unclaspt are still.
Behold,
The secret of the world is *sex*
En, amor regit omnia, vivat rex !
And thus the gray and old
Are turned to gold,
By union and communion of the parts
Divided but then guided by their hearts
That never can be cold,
And shaped anew
Of fire and dew

In the same magic mould.
And thus from wedded grace,
Come fruits and flowers
Through shining showers,
When heaven and earth embrace ;
When pleasure meets with pain,
And life and death
Unite their breath,
The man is born again.
From kissing seas and strands,
That kiss and quarrel
With waves and coral,
Uprise new forms and lands.
And rules in all the fates
The sexual thirst,
Which from the first
Creates and recreates.
This quickens every gloom,
And rolls afar
The radiant star,
And makes the crimson bloom.
Behold,
This is the universal law,
Stamped on the petty straw
And on the planet,
And in the frailest fibre of each fold
Whereby all textures hold,
And in the awe
And miracle of earth since God began it.
This is the rule
Of every gas
And mass
And in the movement of each molecule,
The sexual plea
Compelling every atom,
That thrills a cosmic system or a sea,
The lily on the lea,
A churl or Chatham ;
Behind the theologian's bloody articles
And forms of iron

As in the pink siren,
And in the mystic strife and dance of particles
Repelling and attracting
Each and all,
In ever-interacting
Rise and fall
And ebb and flow
That quiver to and fro,
This turns the white cheek ruddy
On the maid
Who lingers with her love yet half afraid,
And on the peach that fires the garden wall,
And frames the study
Of some saintly Paul,
An antechamber to the bliss
Of heaven,
With all its holy leaven
In one kiss.
This makes the road so mired less muddy,
Brings
The ragged beggars purple robes of kings
And crowns,
And wipes away the bloody
Frowns
From garments rolled in battle;
And a child
Can draw
By the sweet tether of its law
And tender prattle
Bosoms rude and wild,
And fiercest cattle
Home subdued and mild.
The harlot steps that clamber
To the bed
Beneath the moon's white witness calm and still,
The bloom that is a bridal chamber
Shed
Even as you clasp it at your careless will;
The baby form that shows
A face averted—

A bond asserted,
As the sunrise glows ;
The crash of antlered heads,
The lone dark stations
Which duty treads,
The chemist's combinations,
The rush of elements and souls
That marry,
The force that conquers and controls
Prince Harry—
They all are one,
And all alike are done
In man and metal
By the same sweet yoke
That woke
A great peninsula or petal.
The sexual fire
That roses morning's brows
And bows
And tames the Titan's awful ire,
Illumes the glow-worm's lamp
And sets its stamp
Upon the flies that deck
The snowy deck
And midnight tresses of the beauteous Mexican,
And strikes its flame
Of glorious burning shame
In the crabbed student at his musty lexicon.
Two portions of one Broken Heart,
His Heart,
God set apart,
Who fashioned earth and all
And set eternity in great and small
For man to win
And find himself therein
With God ;
And by the blessed light of love
Whereby he trod,
Which bound in one bright tether
Though parted things below and things above,

He bade man draw
(By that benignant law)
All things alike in earth and heaven together
Closer and closer still ;
That God and man
And Nature
With the one same legislature
Might so be one in will
And perfect being,
And one in seeing
In the shade and shine,
By the great sexual human thirst divine."
She spoke, and all the wonder
Of all flowers
With flushes drawn from under
By warm showers,
Flashed out in fire asunder
All their powers
Above her and around her,
And the rose
With crimson wreaths enwound her
White repose.
But from her golden tresses
Fell a rain
Of lilies, like caresses
Sweet as pain.
And in her conquering glances
Glowed the light
And love of all romances
And delight.
And, lo, the sound of thunder
Of far climes,
And music with the plunder
From all times !
She breathed on me the story
Of the lands,
And bathed me in the glory
Of her hands ;
She clothed me with her kisses
And her grace,

And steeped me in the blisses
Of her face ;
Till in me dawned the seeing
Beyond strife,
And through me glowed the being
Of all life.
But then at last
The Vision past,
And left
A rose at rest
Upon my breast
Bereft.
And still at morn
I know the thorn
Must be,
And when it burns
That face returns
To me.
And all the world is that one glorious sight,
And all the world is fire and dew and light.

THE ARCHITEKTON.

Day by day the fabric rose
Rich in marble court and column,
Very calm and white and solemn,
In a rapture of repose
And a beauty
That seemed duty,
Just as flowers in spring unclosed.
Line on line
The splendour sprang,
Shaped into a holy shrine,
Earthly half and half divine ;
Leaf with blossom did entwine ;
Though no clink of chisel rang
Nor the clang
Of any hammer,
With its clamour

Talking in its eager tones
To the echoes and the stones ;
 Never tool,
Used in any sculptor's school,
 Sounded forth
Messages to south or north,
 Playing brightly,
 Straying lightly
On a bevelled edge or curve,
That a hair's breadth would not swerve.
 Stone on stone
 The fabric stept,
 Always higher,
 Always nigher
To the stars upon their throne,
Which above it sleepless kept
 Watch alone,
 When mortals slept ;
While the Architekton wept.
Mortals ate and drank and married
And about the winecup tarried
 Sad and soiled,
While the maker of it toiled
Day and night and upward carried
 Still his thought,
 And grimly wrought
 As for life
In an ecstasy of strife.
 No one heard
 The temple grow,
Though all heaven itself was stirr'd
And it mounted ever on,
Perfect as a Parthenon
 White as snow,
Washed in sunset's crimson glow ;
As in silence the adept
 Worked and wept
 With glorious tears,
 Hopes and fears
 Whose lightning spears,

Stabbed and stoled the dolorous years ;
And men crept ;
Till to light each turret leapt.
No one heard
The builded word,
No one saw
The gates of gold,
Wonderful without a flaw
And obedient to its law
Like the gates of dawn unfold
In expectancy and pride,
Which for God himself divide,
When He treads across the sky
Out of gloom
Into day's young rosy room,
Through His calm eternity,
Here in gleam
And there in glimmer,
Like a dream
Now bright, now dimmer.
No one saw
The scene of awe.
No one felt
A poet dwelt
Royally among the rabble
That could only buzz and babble,
Steal and smite
And bark and bite
And in dirty pleasures dabble ;
As he moved
In mystic way,
As he proved
The iron and clay,
Fashioning with love profuse
And his skill
Each old abuse
And grey ill,
From above reborn again
Out of death in fiery pain,
To the wonder of his will ;

While he knelt
Before the shrine
And became himself divine.
No one felt,
What love he dealt.
No one knew
The dreadful dew,
Blood and tears and burning sweat
Wherewith course on course was set,
Arch on arch
In upward march,
Till in crowning grace they met
In the wedlock of the arts,
Breathing passion through all parts ;
While it flashed
Aloft like flame,
And was dashed
Through its white frame
With the light of sun and moon
And the stars when night has noon,
And was splashed
With other rays
Like the glow of bygone days.
No one knew,
The way it grew,
No one cared
How ill he fared,
When the poet's life was smitten
And the shadow of a ban
Passing fell athwart the plan
Which upon his heart was written ;
While he spent himself for men,
In a more than cosmic ken,
Drawing riches
From all lands,
For proud niches
Where calm hands
Moved and moulded,
And unfolded
Leaf and bosom

Of pure blossom,
Bud and bristle
Of the thistle,
And the smile of angel faces
Peeping from the thorns' embraces,
And the glimpse of sudden feet
In their naked beauty sweet.
No one cared,
What deeds he dared.
Yet each day from some new spiracles
Breathed new miracles,
As the fabric spread through space,
Hourly soared and gathered grace
From the noonshine
And the moonshine,
From the motion
Of the ocean,
From the freshness of the air
When the morning
In adorning
Laughs to find itself so fair ;
Dim with porches
Deep in shade,
Where red torches
Figures made.
O the joys above and under,
As if heaven were burst asunder !
Corridors that ran for ever
In the flight
Of marble might
With an infinite endeavour,
Through the marvel of the mazes'
Mystic sight,
Now in blackness, now in blazes
Of fierce light ;
Vestibules with veiled portals
Opening into chambers vast,
Where immortals
Might recline at God's repast ;
Jewelled chairs,

And stately stairs
Climbing by degrees of glory
Through their stages
Like a story
Stamped in mighty marble pages,
From the mint
Of imperishable print.
Yet invisibly it grew,
Yet inaudibly it towered
As it flowered,
As it drew
All the glamour of the rose,
All the freshness of the dew
When the pearly dawn is new,
All the world of white repose
In the lilies which disclose
Secrets only breathed to few,
Every bloom
And every gloom,
Cloud and light
And day and night,
Virgin leaves
And yellow sheaves,
Sun and showers
And snowy bowers,
Madness, mirth
And fiery leaven,
All the poetry of earth,
All the ecstasies of heaven—
All those to itself it drew,
As it grew
And great branches outward threw.
No one heeded,
No one stood
Wondering before the pile,
Though the lands its lessons needed
And the smile
Vesting it like maidenhood,
Rippling down each rosy aisle
Touched with sunset's lingering guile.

But the Master
 Toiled the faster,
 For he knew
 Art was long and life was brittle—
 Life was little,
 And disaster
 To the rocks of ruin blew,
 If men nodded
 And but plodded
 Though with wings that heavenward flew.
 And at times
 The great Architekton caught
 The far chimes
 Of grand past ages,
 Grace unthought
 And gifts unbought
 By mere wages
 And threw them in his song
 With a music low and long,
 New and old
 Marvellous and marvellous:
 With the robes streaming on,
 Streaming on
 And laughing, singing,
 Running, walking,
 Climbing, creeping,
 Laughing, weeping,
 Flying, falling,
 Flying, falling.
 Now swift, then mild and meek
 To the name of him and seek
 Round the corners
 Of the chimney and the shade
 Of the phœbe's staircase,
 Here, here and there in numbers
 Now one, now
 Ten and one now,
 One and seven and so and so,
 Through the silken screen:
 They were singing

And with crying,
And the whisper
As of some wee baby lisper,
Dying, dying, dying, dying,
All in play
And far away,
Far away.
For many nations,
Many æons,
Dirges, lullabies and pæans
In his harmony were one;
And he laid the vast foundations
Of those flame-like exaltations
In his eldest dearest son;
And the gates
Arose like fates
All insatiable in hunger,
And devoured
At last the younger
Only thus with blood endowered;
As in ages long ago,
Long ago,
Builded under night and noon,
Builded to the magic moon,
Hiel raised his Jericho;
While the palm trees' stately bound
Stood like sentinels around,
And the roses flashed like fire
In their red and white attire,
And the Moab mountain's hue
In the distance
Dim as fairy land's existence
Melted blue.
So the Architekton wrought
Thrones of thought
And for sacramental wine
Chiseled chalice,
Pure, divine,
And solemn tables
Starting out from sudden gables,

Though the malice
As of destiny withstood,
In his holy hardihood.
And his knife
With separation's
Consecrations
Spared not treasure, time or toil,
Love or life—
Built his being and his heart
(Burning like the sacred oil)
With the cunning of his art
Wooed as passion woos a wife—
Built the calmness and the strife
And the spoil
Of every feeling
(As he laboured, fighting, kneeling)
In each part, throughout the whole,
Till the splendid work was finished
And no more
From his great store
Could be added, nought diminished,
And it was a living soul.
Then he bade
The people enter
Through a hundred carven doors,
Each a centre
Of the goldshine and goldshade,
Where the floors
Ran in marble left and right
Warm and wonderful and bright,
Spreading spaciouly
Until graciously
Lost in light ;
Where the fountains leapt and luted
To each other's
Strains as brothers,
With the flitting birds that fluted
Notes that tingled
And that mingled
With the waves that soared and sang,

Till the roof with music rang.
There the hall
Serene and tall
Stretched its thousand stately pillars
White and strong
And proud and long,
As if stepping to a song
And the highest art's fulfillers,
In its royalty of room
With its riches all abloom
By the birds like lightning crost
And with flowers like coloured snow
Torn and tost
And paved below ;
While clear faces calm and grave,
Poet and philosopher,
From the chastened chapter
And the august architrave
Looked in love
From bliss above.
But the people mouthed and mocked,
As they flocked
To the wonder of his art,
Wherein he had wrought his heart
And his life ;
And they murmured, " Give us bread,
Give us butter,
And the blessings of the gutter ;
For the world is over rife
With cathedral forms and fables
And their parts ;
We would rather styes and stables
Than your arts."
So they turned away in scorn
From that miracle of grace,
And the new and fairer morn ;
Clouds fell on the Poet's face ;
Every thought became a thorn,
And his birth his burying place.
Wealth and wisdom, toil and time,

All he was and all he had,
Chant of battle, ocean chime,
Treasure plucked from every clime,
Truths that leave the bosom glad,
 Summer's breath
 And life and death,
Spells that make a people mad
 With the might
 Of pure delight,
Met and mingled in the glory
 And the gloom
 Of his great story,
Clasping heaven with sacred tie,
Though it only told his doom—
Though it only was his tomb;
But it lived, and cannot die.

EASTER EVE.

It was Easter eve in a late late year
 When the birds had gone to bed,
And the lily dropt a glorious tear
 But the white rose it turned red;
On the pansy fell a sudden fear,
 And the thorn forgot the spite
That had armed it with a cruel spear,
 And the red rose it turned white.
Lo, the Master in His beauty came
 With His risen meed of might,
And the flowers before Him flashed like flame
 And the grass leapt into light;
For His Presence turned the wild thing tame,
 And the trees around Him felt
A rapture that was akin to shame,
 And the daisies to Him knelt.
O the green leaves blossomed by Him blest
 And their fragrant life gave up,
And the lichen laughed in its shadowed rest
 And upraised its crimson cup;

While the clover with its bleeding breast
Laid bare the honeyed heart,
And the creatures closer to Him prest
For they all in Him had part.
Then the Master plucked of the fairest flowers,
And upon His bosom laid
The tansy drank of His wondrous powers,
Till it blushed as if half afraid ;
As He sought the abyss of blasted bowers
Where the lost in anguish lie,
And His roses fell like refreshing showers
On the death that cannot die.
But the roses' thorns were about His head,
And the lily in His hand
Like a sacred cross of glory spread,
That relaxed each burning band ;
And the damned looked up at His loving tread
Which a rainbow round it cast,
And remembered not that they were dead
For a moment, as He past.
Ah, the red flames licked His holy feet
As they moved in mercy on,
And His pathway like a golden street
In the heavenly city shone ;
And the lurid shroud like a bridal sheet
Over tortured beings fell,
And the pains for a moment then were sweet
In the cursed heart of Hell.

THE SECRET.

'Twas dusk, and one was walking by my side
In all the glorious dawn
Of maiden joy—
The blessed inextinguishable pride
From heavenly fountains drawn,
Divinely coy.
But neither spoke, though music more than sound

And more than studied arts
 With every power,
Flowed from the silence with the darkness wound,
 Until our wedded hearts
 Burst into flower.
And then the ages backward roll'd their gates
 Of endless space and time,
 And truth unsought
With all the wonders of all worlds and fates
 Met in one perfect chime,
 A single thought.
And we beheld the secret treasured long,
Through golden mists of centuries and song.

THE DAFFODIL.

When a verdure clothes the hill,
Comes the yellow Daffodil,
 Daffodil,
 Daffodil;
Bowling to the icy blast
Oft with snow about it cast,
Breathing stories of the past;
 Brightly nodding
 To the plodding
Gardener at his daily toil,
 Till the sunset on the hill;
Like a king to scatter spoil,
Turning into gold the soil;
 Though it's but the Daffodil,
 Daffodil,
 Daffodil.

When in music leaps the rill,
Laughs the yellow Daffodil,
 Daffodil,
 Daffodil;
Though in March is bitter air
And it has no sheltered lair,

Laughs to find itself so fair ;
Gently lisping
With its crisping
Stalks to any idle gust
Or the ripples of the rill,
In a sweet and simple trust
Lisping just because it must
And it is the Daffodil,
Daffodil,
Daffodil.

With a balm for every ill,
Blows the yellow Daffodil,
Daffodil,
Daffodil ;
Give me not the cursed gold
Making hearts of pity cold
And the face of childhood old ;
But the metal
Of its petal,
Better far than precious ore
With a freshness above ill
Which the mint of Nature bore
To enrich our treasure store ;
Yes, we love the Daffodil,
Daffodil,
Daffodil.

Wildly let it grow at will,
Bless the yellow Daffodil,
Daffodil,
Daffodil ;
For it takes no common part
With a beauty more than art,
And is rooted in our heart;
While the pages
Of the ages,
If they blazon feast or fight
Chronicles of strength or skill

Never miss thine Eden light
Which leaves wood and meadow bright,
Home more home, dear Daffodil,
Daffodil,
Daffodil.

A DIRTY NIGHT.

"A Dirty Night" the coastguard said!
I leaned into the dark
And stabbed the shadows with quick looks
Too fond to be afraid,
That read the farthest flickering spark
As written broad in books.
Where was my child, my sailor boy,
My light, my life, my only joy,
Who early sailed that morning
My dread of danger scorning,
As if the ocean were his toy,
In all his young adorning?
His kiss was tingling on my brow—
I feel it now,
Though fifty empty years have past
Nor brought at last
Beneath the blue or clouded dome
My darling home.
It was a dreadful night, the surf
Drove inland far on tree and turf,
And scared the seabirds flew
All draggled shoreward
As I gazed nor'ward,
The blast so fiercely blew;
With slant wings rumped
And feathers crumpled,
As higher still it grew.
A horror from the break of day
Upon me like the sunset lay,
And as I leaned into the night
Which my great famished love made bright,
I would the billows
Were my pillows

To bear me to my heart's delight.
 The hungry waves
 Seemed rolling graves
Heaped high above the myriads fled,
Who voyaged forth nor dreamed of wrack
But never to their own came back,
And now were numbered with the dead.
 And where was he
 So dear to me,
Who gaily sallied out to roam
Upon the cruel climbing foam,
 As bold and bright
 As morning's light
Athwart his yellow native loam ?
 I saw no sign
 But gloom malign
On the horizon and the sea,
 My breast was numb,
 And heaven seemed dumb
To my heart-broken voiceless plea.
I gave the passing coastguard hail
And told him of the lingering sail
That soon must bring my darling back ;
He turned a troubled eye on me,
And slewing slowly on his track,
" It is a dirty night," said he.

— — —

THE BABY PILGRIMS.

I saw the Baby Pilgrims pass
 As walking upon air,
The snowflakes falling on the grass
 Were not so soft and fair ;
 Their little feet
 Made music sweet
That filled the land with laughter,
 And as they trod
 The blighted sod
Burst into green thereafter.

I saw them when a little child,
And as they journeyed forth they smil'd
 At *me* with tender
 Sudden splendour,
That broke through precious pearly tears ;
And in a moment all the years
Gave up the secret of their fears,
 And hate grew tender ;
The future, with its soldier's march
 Of feasts and fights
 And days and nights
 In mixed delights,
Before me stood a rainbow arch—
 A rainbow arch.

I saw them once, I saw them twice,
 With lilies in their train
And fragrance as of Orient spice—
 I saw them yet again ;
 Their little frames
 Like carven flames
 Had an exceeding glory,
 And their great eyes
 Were mysteries
 Of some unearthly story.
And where they stept the poorest earth
Forgot its pining and its dearth,
 And from its bosom
 Poured the blossom
Of whitest flowers with honey cup,
Whereof the angels well might sup—
Yes, lilies at their feet sprang up,
 With virgin bosom.
I saw them, when a fiery youth
 With fearless grip
 On Beauty's hip
 And thirsty lip,
I tore the veil from naked Truth—
 From naked Truth.

Once more, when in the toiling mass
I hardly held my own,
I saw the Baby Pilgrims pass,
So sweet and so unknown.
 Their little hands
 Were golden bands
And with my hands seemed mingled,
 Each little breast
 To mine seemed prest
And through me throbbed and tingled ;
Their forms were beautiful and bare,
And grim as darkness every care
 Died at their blessing
 And caressing ;
As heart to heart, and face to face,
This mortal flesh and spirit grace
Met in one warm and long embrace
 And found one blessing.
But now that shadows round me creep
 With coming night,
 Those beings bright
 And more than sight
Are drawing near, and mix with sleep—
 And mix with sleep.

THE LIVING DEAD.

They are not dead, they cannot die—
 They cannot die,
If low their frames in ashes lie ;
For nought can loose the spirit tie,
Which links in more than marriage bond
This death-like life and life beyond
 That is not dead,
 Though it has fled
And we who linger may despond,
Who hunger for the golden head—
 The golden tresses
 And caresses,

That mixed with ours like woven fire,
The heart's delight, the mind's desire ;
They are not dead, it cannot be,
And spirit evermore must live
However far and fugitive ;
And yet again these eyes shall see
 The clinging hands
 Not now to meet,
 Whose clasp was sweet,
 As soft commands,
 And little feet—
 And little feet.

Ah, nought can quench the spirit life,
 The spirit life
That yields to vulgar toil and strife,
Wherewith this weary world is rife,
A portion of its inmost grace
And overflows on earth a space,
 And lends the eyes
 The light of skies,
That breaks like sunrise on the face
And only like the sunset flies.
 If we go mating,
 They keep waiting
In other lands for our lost love,
Which draws them oft from Heaven above ;
They do not die, it cannot be ;
For spirits wonderful and white
Are as the Maker infinite
And flit through æons fair and free.
 But yet we miss
 Your tender tread
 And welcome shed
 In looks that kiss,
 Ye living dead,
 Ye living dead.

The spirit world, *that* only lives,
 That only lives,
Which of its deathless beauty gives



The dew of God's best donatives
To all—the maiden's magic 'tire,
The thought like some cathedral spire,
 The march of men
 With godlike ken,
The primal pulsing cloud of fire,
The dream in stone, the poet's pen.
 O they are twining
 Dear refining
Threads of a subtle sunshine round,
Wherewith our very souls are wound.
From every height, from every deep,
Within our cradles, at our graves,
Their ministries like ocean waves
Bathe these poor hearts with blessed sweep.
 For faithful still
 With presence fair
 As evening air,
 They always fill
 The empty chair—
 The empty chair.

CLOUDLAND.

Cloudland,
Proud land,
Up above the earth so high
That the gates of Heaven seem nigh
As the lover and his sigh,
 Cloudland ;
And the bee with honeyed thigh,
 Proud land,
Cannot ever come to thee,
Though he is so fair and free—
May not rise beyond the bowers
 Of the flowers ;
And the daintiest daring bird
Which the tallest tree has stirr'd
Shall not reach thy cities thus
 With its powers ;

Of thy shapes, new earth and skies,
Cloudland,
Blessed sweet hypocrisies,
Proud land.

SHE CAME.

She came as gently as a dove,
She came in white attire
And maidenly desire,
And simply said to all, "I love."
She spake to mighty men of old,
She spake in palaces of gold
Those words with their unearthly thrill,
And drew her garments closer still.
But no one listened to her voice,
And no one heeded *her*.
But gauds and gossamer,
Were still the idols of their choice.
Though down the corridors of time,
Her footsteps rang a better chime;
And here and there some gentle breast,
Throbbled back the music on her breast.
She vainly bent on camp and court
Her pure face virginal,
And trod the festival
Where crownèd vice made virtue sport.

She lay where homeless outcasts lie,
She lay in bitter need
With poverty for creed,
And simply said to all, "I die."
She pleaded with the lost and poor,
She pleaded at the cottage door
The sentence of her solemn care,
And laid her lily bosom bare.
But no one harkened to her cry,
And no one counted *her*
A worthy sufferer,

Although she mourned exceedingly.
She showed her wounds, the sisters' dart
That pierced her tortured bleeding heart,
The white robes soiled with foreign stains,
The soft arms bruised by brothers' chains.
She vainly brought a balm for ill,
 To sweeten labour's lot
 And cleanse each ugly blot—
She vainly lay and suffered still.

THINGS TO BE.

See down the broadening years,
See through transfigured fears
Greater the light appears,
 Grander the glory;
Dawn of a brighter day,
Dawn of a better way,
With all the world at play—
 God's new love-story.
Larger the minds of men,
Fairer the women then,
Vaster the creed and ken
 In a true living;
Gold in the wealthier books,
Gospels in children's looks,
Swords turned to pruning-hooks,
 Earth one thanksgiving.
Others shall see those times,
Others shall hear the chimes
Wedding peals in all climes
 Of the free nations;
Mine be alone the trust,
By gentle word or just
Deed to enrich the dust
 For those foundations.

I can do something now,
I can uplift a vow

Unto the Heaven and bow
In some dim corner ;
I can achieve a part,
Whence nobler work may start,
If but the broken heart
Of a spent mourner.
Others may tread me down,
Others may wear the crown
Of undeserved renown,
When I am ashes ;
Never a tear for me,
In happier homes to be
When every land is free,
Dropt by dark lashes.
Give me the martyrs' thrones,
If yet my crumbling bones
Serve as the stepping-stones
For wider stages ;
Let me be only dross,
And over my dead loss
Shall ransomed peoples cross
To the crowned ages.

THE YELLOW LEAF.

My heart is cold, my hand forgets the cunning
Which turned to beauty all it touched and made
Sweet music out of silence, and set running
Bright fountains in the shivering desert shade ;
I do not see the treasures that I did
In stocks and stones, by fancy jewelled o'er,
And at my step turned into costly store
Upon my eager way of yesterday,
With revelations all from others hid ;
My heart is cold,
These eyes are sad and old,
I have no fellow now the leaf is yellow.

My mind is dark, and long hath lost the meaning
Of life's dear mystery that once lured me on,
And yet repelled me from the golden gleanings
In miry street or pillared Parthenon ;
I am astray, a pilgrim without clue
Tost up and down by every idle whim
And beacons false that leave the path more dim
That dazzled with its ray but yesterday,
When all the heaven was one great rose of blue ;
My mind is dark
And meets no guiding mark,
I have no fellow now the leaf is yellow.

My hope is faint, and builds no more the visions
Of larger moments when the gates rolled back
And bars went down before its conquering track,
But round me close grey walls and blank derisions ;
The weeds are simple weeds, and do not rush
To kingly robes of purple as I pass ;
I see no skies reflected on the grass
Or common clay, as yesterday,
And earth remembers not its maiden blush ;
My hope is faint
And feels a mortal taint,
I have no fellow now the leaf is yellow.

My sun hath set, the near horizons darken
With unfamiliar shadows that have grown
To shapeless phantoms, but are still my own ;
I hear the winter's knell, and would not harken ;
The world seems dying with me, as I go
Into the grave-like gloom, that opens arms
To bury me with all those cheating charms
That held their sweeter sway of yesterday,
And silence settles on me like the snow ;
My sun hath set
Although I linger yet,
I have no fellow now the leaf is yellow.

THE CROSS OF FIRE.

From the wideness and the wonderment of Space,
In the blindness of the lands,
While the world apparelled in its virgin grace
Lifted up to Heaven dumb hands ;
There was smoke upon the altar
And a veil above the eyes
And athwart the azure skies,
Prayer was vain and seemed to palter
With the flesh that could but falter
Forth its heart in broken cries ;
Not one flash of simple truth a child might con,
And more reverend age would fan
To the fulness of a plan,
Linking with his Maker man,
No anointed guide to whisper, "*Pass it on,*
Pass it on !"

In the desert where he communed with the stars
And the dreadful silence trod,
Came the first glimpse as through iron prison bars
Of the solemn Light called God,
And the prophet's heart was shaken
By the shadow which he saw,
In the knowledge that was awe
And when seen was not forsaken,
While his life did all awaken
To the Learning of the Law ;
And a Voice from out the Vision, as it shone
With a glory not of earth,
And around him threw a girth
On the desolation's dearth,
Breathed as softly as a secret, "*Pass it on,*
Pass it on !"

In the bondage and the burden of the years
When in darkness rose the day,
And with travail of the sacrificial fears
Knelt the grim command to slay,

Pealed the prophet's cry of thunder
Down the ages with a call
Laying low the barrier wall
And red hands that gript their plunder,
Till the darkness burst asunder
Bringing rays of hope to all ;
And to bold disciples, ere his time had gone,
He bequeathed the Torch of Flame
And the one Mysterious Name
Never to be dimmed by shame,
And with dying accents murmured, "*Pass it on,*
Pass it on !"

In the visionary East where Truth was born
Of the starshine and the streams,
Where the Priest and Poet hailed the ruddy morn
Through a mist of golden dreams ;
Rose the Fount of Fire in burning
Bosoms which had bridled still
Their indomitable will,
With an upward spirit spurning
Dust of earth and dimly turning
To the knowledge that would kill,
In the marble mystery called Babylon,
When the soul's sublime pretence
Sought and found its dark defence
In a dead magnificence,
Lo, the white-robed figures muttered, "*Pass it on,*
Pass it on !"

In the splendour of the speculative West,
Where the busy curious brain
Bodied airy thoughts and in a rapturous rest
Beautified each pulse of pain ;
Soared the mind to nobler stature
Wonderful and white and warm,
Snow and peace and flower and storm
Taken fresh from naked Nature,
And with art's new legislature
Moulded to a fairer form.

On the pure stone pages of the Parthenon
 Beamed the holy Lamp of Light,
 Spreading wings more broad and bright
 Which essayed a loftier flight,
And the builders proudly chanted, "*Pass it on,*
 Pass it on !"

Oft it fell and faded, when it might not make
 Head against the ribald shout
Hostile, but rekindled at the martyr's stake
 Never could it quite go out ;
 Blood-stained fingers grasped the glory
 Of that heritage of Light
 In a second vaster sight,
 Rose red maidens sighed the story,
 And on heads of sages hoary
 Fell that calm and crownèd might ;
Kings assumed it as a mantle kings might don
 Grander than a royal dress,
 And it clothed the blank distress
 With its lines of loveliness,
And the mouths of infants babbled, "*Pass it on,*
 Pass it on !"

Still in vestal purity and humble heart
 And from children's prayerful eyes
Leapt the Truth, and made with more than art
 Greener earth and bluer skies ;
 Lisping lips, and meditation
 Of grey seers who wove of Time
 All its secrets in one chime,
Bards whose night was revelation,
 Saints with awful consecration,
 Silence, left it more sublime.
Fed by faith, enriched with doubts august it shone
 Forth a living Cross of Fire,
 With an infinite desire
 Ever upward to aspire,
And the world, like rolling waves cried, "*Pass it on,*
 Pass it on !"

THE RIVER OF TEARS.

I came to the River of Tears,
Where the maidens watched and wept
And the thistles with threatening spears
Through the shivering shadows crept.
I said to myself, "I will track
This dolorous tide to its source,
I will follow the windings back
By the snares of the snaky course."
But the thorns arose in their might
And they thrust with malignant arms,
And white bosoms of warm delight
Met mine with voluptuous charms.
And white hands like the clambering vine
With the scent of the drowsy grape,
Caught my own, and through dews divine
Burst the bloom of each shining shape.
But I hurried along in haste,
Though the small feet glimmered white
And the sinuous easy waist
Had a joy that was infinite.
While the languorous hot breath came
And went on my very cheek,
And the lips with their scarlet flame
Made my purpose wan and weak.
O the bliss of the fragrant face,
O, the passion of clinging hands,
O the madness of naked grace
In the loves of those poppied lands!
But I passed through the purple air
And the limbs that disdained their 'tire,
And the gold of the gloried hair,
Like a brand redeemed from fire.
I refused the eyes, though they flashed
With a cruel and conquering light,
Through their curtains heavily lashed,
In the quest of a vaster sight.
They were only a dream to me,
A dream of the summer south,

Bare shoulder and amorous knee
And the ravishing rosy mouth.
So I came to the Holy Mount,
In a dim and delicious land ;
And lo, *there* was a silvery Fount
That gushed from a Baby's hand.
And I said to myself, " O this
At last is the blessed Source
Of the tide with the sad abyss,
And its never-ending course ;
I have traversed the world of the dead
And the world of the beautiful fears,
I have come to the solemn head
Of the sacred River of Tears." .
But the Baby pointed up
To the misty peaks of blue,
For the hand with its lily cup
Was not the rejoicing clue.
So I looked, and again the stream
Brake full on my troubled gaze,
Like a ghastly tide in a dream
That is seen through a mocking haze.
But the pathway grew to a height
And the bounding walls were steep,
And the waves in their weary flight
Did nothing but wail and weep.
And I struggled yet sternly on
Up the arduous narrowing space,
Through the garish gleam that shone,
Like the smile on a dying face.
And the rocks were terrible swords
As if human flesh were sweet,
And the briars were gins and cords
That gript at my tottering feet.
And they turned into loathsome shapes,
Now in glimmer and now in gloom,
As if scowling fiends or apes
Were shutting me in to doom ;
Till I closed my desperate eyes
With the torturing stress and strain,

For the lurid and scornful skies
Beat down on my haunted brain.
Then I came with my burden of care
To a bar on the bitter road,
Where a skeleton bleached and bare
Lay crushed by a heavier load ;
And a gurgling groaning thread
Trickled down, but could scarce escape
From the mouldering sides of the dead,
As it rotted with ribs agape.
And I said to myself, " At length
I arrive at the evil Source,
Which saps our desires and strength
With the blight of its barren course ;
For *here* in this mortal mass
Is the taint of the murmuring years,
That smothers the smiles that pass
With the rolling River of Tears."
But a fleshless hand uprose,
While the bones with a gruesome thrill
Seemed to sigh in their grim repose,
And it pointed me forward still.
Yes, it beckoned me higher yet
To the home of the thunder cloud,
Where the sun was about to set
In the shade of a crimson shroud.
But now I could hardly scale
The fence of the iron crags,
As they loomed before me pale
With their horrible juts and jags.
And the lightning leapt and fell
On the track of the trembling peaks,
Till I seemed like a soul in hell
In the rain that the judgment wreaks ;
For it toyed with my draggled hair
And I bathed in the quivering fire,
While the boding sulphurous air
Was the breath of a funeral pyre.
But above me yet the tide
Dropt down in a dwindling flood,

From the toppling mountain side
In a blazing streak of blood.
I could scarcely climb and crawl
Up the threatening thwart sheer path,
That rose a forbidding wall
With ruin and woe and wrath.
But I still toiled feebler on
With trouble of foot and hand,
Till the setting sun was gone
Burnt out like a smouldering brand.
And I said to myself, "The Night
With its cloak is the fatal Source,
I have followed the stream aright
Through the maze of its upward course ;
In its mould is the mischief cast
Of the withering joys and ears,
I have solved the riddle at last
And the truth of the River of Tears."
But from out of the shadowy womb
With its terrors grim and great,
As a voice from a sealed tomb
Came a message of fearful fate.
And the lightning made a sign
With its crooked finger of red,
And it scrabbled a score malign
On the darkness overhead ;
And it pointed me still more far
To the infinite depths of Space,
To the dim and distant star
And the planet's dwelling place.
So I mounted the ladder of air,
And it felt beneath my feet
Like the steps of a giant stair
Where the stone of the iron meet.
But the stream was my comrade still
With its gossamer thread of fire,
Like an almost viewless rill
Or the ghost of a dead desire.
And the breezes buoyed me up
When I stumbled upon the brink,

And the cloud was an ebon cup
That gave of its treasures to drink.
Lo, my weakness passed away
And my paces refused to halt,
As I climbed without one delay
To the purple spangled vault.
For the waft as of sweeter lips
And the hold as of stronger hands,
Dispelled the last weary eclipse,
While I traversed those wonder lands.
Till at last in my journey I came
To a marvellous Gate of Light,
And a bubbling Fount of Flame
That arose from the realms of Night.
But, behold, as I stricken stopt,
At the porch of the blasting flood,
From the dreadful threshold dropt
Little globes as of living blood.
And I said to myself, "Ah, *here*
Lies the seat of the very Source,
In the breast of the burning sphere,
Is unravelled the endless course ;
I see the beginning of all
The sorrow that flows and sears,
I descry the fount of the fall
Of the terrible River of Tears."
But then from the mystery broke
The sound of a sudden breath,
And the awful Silence spoke
The enigma of life and death.
"The stream has the blessed start
That you sought, as you blindly trod,
In the riven and bleeding Heart
Of the homeless crucified God."

NATURE'S SECRET.

I asked the red rose, how its colour came
From cold black earth in blushing robes of flame ;
I asked the lily, how the snood of snow

Grew on its dewy form from death below ;
I asked the violet, how it got the scent
Which touched our souls like some sweet instrument ;
I asked the leaf, how to that living green
Laboratories toiled with hand unseen ;
I asked the poet, how he caught the song
Which to its music rolled the world along ;
I asked the speaker, how his dream's desire
Like lightning flashed and set the earth afire ;
I asked the soldier, how his conquering sword
Razed mountains in the battles of the Lord ;
I asked the woman, how her scarlet lips
Wrought mischief more than earthquake and eclipse ;
I asked the baby, how it drew the trust
Which leapt to God like incense from the dust ;
I asked the ocean, how it won the grace
Of freedom shadowed in a maiden's face ;
I asked the heart, how rose the hungering cry
That nought could answer but Eternity ;
And one response from all in concert fell,
"*We know the secret but we cannot tell.*"

MY CASTLE IN THE AIR.

When the duty now seems double
And my buoyant hope takes flight,
While the shadow as of night
Makes the pastime toil and trouble ;
When no service brings me joy
And the rapid
Stream runs vapid,
And a plaything is no toy ;
Then with all my griefs and crosses
Once so welcome and so fair,
Off I fly with loves and losses
To my Castle in the Air.

If the task that was a pleasure
Palls upon my weary brain,
And the old delicious pain

Of pursuing yields no treasure ;
If the sacramental cup
Of afflictions'
Benedictions
As pure bitterness foams up ;
Then from every bane and burden
That with bliss no longer pair,
Off I fly for other guerdon
To my Castle in the Air.

Should my children be too fretful
And the dreary hours drag by,
Each like an eternity,
And good fortune pass forgetful ;
Should the sun be clouded quite
And the noonrise,
Pale as moonrise,
Or the lily not look white ;
Then from earth and all its minions,
Busy street and climbing stair,
Off I fly on eagle pinions
To my Castle in the Air.

Do the cares that come to gladness
As with roses wed the thorn
And the mist enwraps the morn,
Bow my mirth to thoughts of madness ?
Do the prizes pierce my hand,
While ambition
Proves perdition,
And the crowning is a brand ?
Then from all the frantic hurry
Of our modern Mammon's lair,
Off I fly beyond the worry
To my Castle in the Air.

When the balm of high anointing
Ceases to assuage my breast,
And the fever of unrest
Burns with dreadful disappointing ;

When the colour leaves the flower,
And the starlit
Eyes and scarlet
Lips desert my lady's bower ;
Off I fly from fading visions
And the empty heart or chair,
With their mockings and derisions,
To my Castle in the Air.

If the faces long so kindly,
Which I could not but adore,
Smile not now as heretofore,
And away from me turn blindly ;
If the hand, with kissing clasp
Of warm fingers,
No more lingers
All responsive in my grasp ;
Then to brightness ever beaming,
And to beauty ever fair,
Off I fly on clouds of dreaming
To my Castle in the Air.

Do not ask me where the column
Of my calm and cloistered seat,
In its rapturous retreat,
Rises white and pure and solemn ;
Do not lightly seek to guess,
Where these graces'
Pleasant places
Sleep in languid loveliness ;
When my joy runs high, or only
Deeps beneath me sigh despair,
Off I fly aloft and lonely
To my Castle in the Air.

THE DARK ANGEL.

In the fair and free beginning of the bright and happy
years,
I was born in shine and shadow
Of the mountain and the meadow,

With the lispings as of laughter, and a trouble as of tears.

Ah, the prophet found me helpful and the priest he bound me slave,

And in temples dim and awful

With their bloody rites unlawful .

I was present at the sacrifice and dug the victim's grave.

Out of ghastly groves that stretched strange arms and reared a horrid head

Making dusky court and column,

With a murmur sad and solemn

I arose in garments grey and held my converse with the dead.

Weeping mothers knew and cursed me as they heard my trailing robe,

When it rustled round the bosom

With its lily baby blossom,

As I came in mournful mission for the treasures of the globe.

And the children fled with seared and sobbing breasts when I drew near

From my ghostly track of terror,

And the foot that with no error

Strode straight onward though through iron ranks of clashing sword and spear.

But I see nought of the sadness with these eyes bereaved and blind,

And from trodden paths of duty

Yet I reap my bliss and beauty,

Though I leave such ruined homes, and scared and broken hearts behind.

I am simply a Dark Angel and must go where I am bid

On my errand long and lonely,

Up and down the earth, and only

In the curtained haunts of twilight and the tomb or coffin-lid.

And I strike in love and mercy and the majesty of strength,

Just to make the heedless careful
Or the ribald lips more prayerful
And to light the world with vigils through its corridors
at length.
If I bring but shade and sorrow and my trembling
touch is cold
And to weakness gloom and anguish,
While the little flowerets languish
At my breath, it is because my sleepless frame is thin
and cold.
But I am the foe of sickness and I ever fight with sin
On my veiled and endless journey,
Like a knight who rides a tourney
For the beautiful and noble and is sure that he must
win.
Though I forage oft with famine and the pestilence and
blood
And red clouds of wrathful sunset,
And no night can stay my onset,
Yet I fill the shrines with suppliants and cleanse the
tainted flood.
For where love is balked or powerless I know my
task, I hear,
And from stormy deeps or stillness
In the brooding hour of illness
I awake, with all my scourges of the Night—for I am
FEAR.

THE RULING PASSION.

I have one passion and no more,
Not yearning for loud fame,
To strive as fools have striven before
Who left a moment's name
Inscribed on sand
With futile hand,
That only showed their shame
And nothing worthy to adore ;
I cared not for the loves of lasses,
Ambition or red wine,

Or vulgar homage of the masses
That wallowed as the swine.

When others on the muddy wave
Of grovelling rose to power,
I could not be a party slave,
I loathed the sordid dower
Of office won
By evil done
That burst in fatal flower—
I would not dig my country's grave;
I scorned the common steps of meanness,
And braved my fellows' frown
Who through dishonour and uncleanness
Won ruin and renown.

I had one passion and no more,
That flashes through my life—
To add a little to the store
Of human wealth and strife;
Although I gave
Unto the grave
Or sacrificial knife
Myself, to get one grain of ore;
I kissed the cross, I hugged the fetter
And brake the virgin soil,
That I might leave one heart-beat better
This world of grinding toil.

And none has ever worked in vain
Who nursed the generous plan,
To ease the burden and the pain
Of his poor brother man,
Or shed on night
One ray of light
Though in a cottage span,
When sad eyes kindled back again;
Not if a single line or sentence
Has waked the woman's part,
And struck the chord of mute repentance
In some lost sister's heart.

I have one passion and no more,
It is my vital breath—
To find a medicine for some sore
Or throw a simple wreath,
Though but on one
Brute thing foredone,
Yet dignified by death
And the great suffering that it bore ;
And if one note of mine made living
More beautiful and young
For any soul, that sought forgiving,
I have not idly sung.

God is my judge, not purblind men,
How I have handled long
The poet's lute, the writer's pen,
Who had no choice but song ;
And if I erred
In careless word,
The tune was never wrong,
Though rudely chanted now and then :
My record may be blurred and blotted
By many a grievous fall,
But yet I walked my path allotted
Predestinate in all.

I had one passion and no more,
My purpose and my pride,
To break the shadow on that shore
Which is the other side ;
If I might raise
By prayer or praise,
Those curtains that divide
The orb'd truth from earth-bound lore ;
I struggled on when flesh turned craven
Within my own weak breast,
To lead my fellows to the Haven
Where I may never rest.

And well I know, by torrents crost,
By desert toil and fast,

No tiniest labour can be lost
And nothing said is past ;
For effort's deeds
Are deathless seeds,
Even though they blossom last
By all the waves and weathers tost ;
And who shall brand with taunt or stigma
These feet that darkly trod,
If I in singing life's enigma
Echoed one thought of God ?

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.

I was resolved to do this thing, or die—
To face the terrors that before us lie,
And cross the threshold of the silent Porch
Alone, unarmed, and with no certain torch
But courage. How could I live tamely on,
And tread the dreary road that fools had gone
For centuries of vegetable life,
When all above and all around was rife
With larger other pulses than our own ?
For what was best and brightest was unknown,
And nothing hindered but the human tie—
I was resolved to do this thing, or die.

I was resolved to do this thing, or die—
Not simply in the vulgar round to vie
With groundlings for each common grace or gift ;
But somehow somewhere to find out a rift
Between this world and that uncharted shore
Which opens once to all nor opens more
And enter through the unutterable shade,
If every power of heaven and earth forbade ;
And with the conquering thought that seemed to
give
The strength desired, I entered and did live,
And saw what is not seen by mortal eye—
I was resolved to do this thing or die.

THE BRIDGE OF DREAD.

Horror and grief and sin, madness and murk and woe
Walled me around and in, shutting inside the foe ;
One little way led out forth from the ghastly gloom,
Through silent doors of doubt over the Bridge of
Doom ;

Under the sword of fire waving across the dead,
Barring the brave desire—over the Path of Dread.

Ray of hope glimmered not in shadow far and near,
All behind was a blot, all before was a fear ;
Lingering, I must go deeper in mire of shame ;
If I went, down below darker the curded flame
Combed into locks of night ; thin as a needle's thread,
Hardly a streak of light, quivered the Path of Dread.

Ah, could I dare to stop seeing the wrath come nigh,
Seeing the judgment drop as my offence ran high ?
Furies in secret force, terror with gnawing fangs,
Guilt and divine remorse drove me with hungry pangs
Out of the hateful past haunting with houndlike tread,
On to the plunge at last over the Path of Dread.

Then as I trod at length lightly upon the Bridge,
Under my foot a strength rose like a mountain ridge ;
Firm as a paven road sprang what had seemed a hearse,
Meet to uplift the load of a great universe ;
Now the grim die was cast, no more a flimsy thread
But as a highway vast, opened the Path of Dread.

FOLLOW THY STAR.

It may be in the morning and it may be at the noon,
It may be with the evening late,
But surely will the Vision come if it should not come
soon

To every heart that fronts its fate ;
O when it draweth near or when it summons thee from
far,

Be equal to the appointed time
Nor dazzled by a devious chime,
And bravely to the end of things just follow thy own
star—

But not another's, though a brother's—
The very one that since thy birth
Has still been gleaming through thy
dreaming
To guide thee to the harbour safe across the homeless
earth.

A thousand thousand goodly orbs are burning in the
sky

And each is beautiful to see,
And some have thrones and some on wings of glory
seem to fly,

But there is only one for thee ;
O if it smileth as to make or frowneth as to mar,
Remember it is truly thine
And for no alien lot may shine—
Be patient the allotted hours, and follow thy own star ;
Yet not the fairest one or rarest
That beckons from a brighter zone,
But this that beauty gives to duty
And from eternity was meant for none but thee alone.

Thine may be but a little light a quiet course to run,
A cottage lamp that flecks the floor ;
It may be lavish with its beams and blazing as a sun,
That opens into dreadful Space a door ;
O should it be a glow-worm faint or comet's awful car,
Be ready for the certain call
That speaks in music once to all,
And listen not to lesser signs and follow thy own star ;
But not a neighbour's, though thy labours
Have helped to kindle it and thrown
Love's blessed jewel as its fuel—
And be content and do not track a beacon save thy
own.

New systems rise, old systems set, and other rays are
dear

And in the upper ocean swim,
While fresh horizons from the womb of Time at last
appear

And our great heavens shall yet grow dim ;
But O there is no mortal bound, there is no prison bar
For thee, if thou wilt simply heed

No rival splendours in thy need,
And in the day and in the night just follow thy own
star ;

Though troubles darken to it hearken,
And tread the pathway hope has trod,
For though in deepest hell thou sleepest
Still it will guide thee home at last unto thyself and
God.

WIND OF THE IRON PEAKS.

Wind of the iron peaks, wind of the northern sky
Bearing the word that speaks out of Eternity ;
Blown through the ages down with the old hero breath,
Fashioning ripe renown, mingled of life and death ;
Wrapt in the sheeted foam written on keels, that proud
Wrestle with thee and roam under the bellied cloud !
Come, be my playmate yet, carry me in thine arms
High above snares that fret bosoms with silken charms ;
Mix me with thee and make strong as thy stubborn feet,
Shadow me round and shake rudely in rapture sweet ;
Strike with that stinging goad, till I become a part
Now of thy rugged road and of thy stormy heart.

Wander with thee I must, here on the hoary mount
Kindling my faded trust, there at the flashing fount ;
Thus I renew the springs ebbing in me, and fly
Forth upon fairer wings large as thy liberty ;
Thus out of leaping flood churned by thy path, I gain
Life for re-leavened blood, glory of pleasant pain.
Then in the yellow land, where the red lichens rest
Painted by autumn's hand, gather me to thy breast ;

Rock me in troubled sleep, pouring about my bed
Grace from the Unknown Deep which thy own circuits
tread;
So that my utter need, drinking thy gusts, may grow
Crowned to some loftier deed, feeling thee through me
flow.

THE MANDATE OF SILENCE.

Once in a morning, scarlet as scorning queens with
adorning
Garments of blood,
Out of the prison Night re-arisen
Day came in flood;
Opened with blushing bosom and flushing cheeks and
red rushing
Steps of the storm,
Gathering round her roses that wound her
Wonderful form;
Crimson her lightning lips, in the bright'ning glow that
was height'ning
Grandeur and grace,
Misty on mountains, fair in the fountains
Clear as God's face.
Then from the glory, washing in gory waves, on my
hoary
Head fell a ray,
Laid like a finger, fondly to linger,
But not in play.
"Thou art anointed, thou art appointed for the
disjointed
Time," said a Voice,
"Greatly to suffer and in the rougher
Stress to rejoice;
Speak not to other, own none a brother, friend, or
as mother
Even or wife;
Silence thy carol, peace thy apparel
Stemming the strife;

Prophets have spoken idly, and broken not one vain
token
Worshipt as Truth ;
Thou be the witness, to the unfitness
Poisoning youth !
Forth from the meaner modes and the leaner lamps
unto cleaner
Pasturings take
Captive, by living upward and giving,
All and re-make."

Thus without staying, though but for praying, with no
delaying
Calmly I came,
Into the struggle where the knaves juggle
Lightly with fame ;
When honour dwindles, spent as old spindles, and none
rekindles
Bravely the fire ;
Where hushed and hidden, fled and forbidden,
Sleeps dim desire.
I utter nothing, clad in the clothing of high betrothing
Bound to God's Will ;
But that ray's gesture, with its red vesture,
Haloes me still.
Out of sin's hollow greedy to swallow more, a few
follow
Fain to be healed ;
But I go humbly, and my lips dumbly
Ever are sealed.

OUR LOST LADY OF HONOUR.

The great Queen is past, the good Queen is dead,
Cross the pure hands and cover the head ;
Speak softly and slowly
And bend the face lowly,
And move about dimly with tears in the tread ;
For the fair Queen is dead.



Lilies and snowdrops for *her*, and the favour
Of roses and violets in one dear savour ;

Because she was sweet,
Because she was fair,
With the sunshine her hair
And the music her feet.

While her words fell as kisses upon our cold lives,
And our bustle and clamour,
With a blessing and glamour,

And drew closer the bonds between husband and wives ;
O the breath of her mouth was a murmurous song

With the dew of the mountains
And the joy of the fountains,

It fired us with duty and fashioned us strong.

But the great Queen has past,
The good Queen is dead,
And the silence is spread
On her glory at last.

The great Queen has past, the good Queen is pale
As the moonlight that lies on the breast of the vale :

She was proud with the beauty
That comes as a duty,

And shines but on brows bravely fronting the gale ;

O the good Queen is pale.

Crown not of gold for our Lady of honour,

Crown of the love that befits the Madonna

Who builded us high,
And with beautiful girth
Joining Heaven to earth
Brought Divinity nigh.

For she looked on our heroes, and splendid they sprang
To the front of the striving,

Where the red swords were riving

And the steel meeting steel gave a jubilant clang ;

While the statesman arose, with a vision that saw

Down the broadening ages

The passionate pages,

And struck with his pen the grand sentence of law.

But the great Queen has past,

The good Queen is pale,
And our epical tale
Is a sky overcast.

The great Queen has past, the good Queen has fled,
With the love in her eyes and the glory she shed,
Who came at our calling
And kept us from falling,
If we only would follow where boldly she led ;
But the fair Queen has fled.
Grave not of marble for *her* but of blessing,
Poured from the heart of a people's confessing
Who have grown with her great,
If they sometimes rebell'd,
As her courage upheld
Their imperial fate.
For she breathed on the prelate, and truly he spoke
With the spirit of nations
And august inspirations,
Till the will of the country was one and awoke ;
And the churchman stept out with a statelier plan,
And discerned the bright border
Of a world-shaping order,
And entered it feeling new Eden began.
But the great Queen has past,
The good Queen has fled,
And the Empire is sped
As with Azrael's blast.

The great Queen has past, the good Queen is gone,
With the promise that like an eternity shone
Round her pathway of plenty,
When the one fared as twenty,
And still the dead kingdom drags wearily on ;
Though the fair Queen is gone.
For the lip of the maiden has lost its clear carol,
And the spot that is nameless defiles her apparel ;
And the modesty now,
That leapt up without shame
Like the altar's white flame,
Is dethroned from her brow.

And the Senate is bought and the leader is sold
For the baubles of places,
And the doom of disgraces
With the might that to-morrow new purchasers hold ;
And the brand of the huckster has cheapened the shrine
With the souls that are bartered
And the trafficking chartered,
While the priests toy with women and trifle with wine.
But the great Queen is past,
The good Queen is gone,
And in new Babylon
Is no mourning or fast.

The great Queen has past, the good Queen is cold,
Carry her out as clay for the mould,
All that was splendour,
All that was tender,
Not to be paid for by silver and gold ;
For the fair Queen is cold.
But we seek her not now, and we serve her not longer,
And our bulwarks are weakness—our arms that struck
stronger,
When our Mistress was dear
As the jewel of life,
And religion no strife
But magnificent fear.
Now the feastings are sordid, the toil has a taint,
While our virtue is venal
And plain honesty penal,
And the sinner leers out from the mask of the saint.
Ah, our meetings and doings are matters for hire,
And we advertise marriage
For the price of a carriage
And a coronet trailed in the gutter and mire.
But the great Queen has past,
The good Queen is cold,
And her story is told,
Though the world stands aghast.

THE MOUNTAIN-TOP VIEW.

(A THEOPHANY).

Earth was beneath me,
And above
The blue sky scribbled o'er with clouds ;
And wanton airs that would enwreath me
Blew kisses soft as love,
And gossamers wove dewy shrouds.
I stood upon the glory of a summit
And watched the pageant of the passing life,
The eternal strife
That flowed from founts more deep than earthly
plummet ;
The mystery of mortal things,
The awe and overshadowings.

What were the meaning
Of despair,
That seemed to settle on the globe,
And whither the unriddled leaning
Of ruin to repair,
Wrapt in the ocean's royal robe ;
I asked who saw each moment gauntly, gaily,
Enacted the red murder of the years
Like clashing spears,
While every creature killed its fellow daily—
In hunger for more room and light—
And only the brute might seemed right.

It looked the panting
And delight
Of nothing less than Crownèd Death,
That broke upon me with the chanting
Of doom and sore affright,
And sorrow burdened earth's hard breath ;
Pain in the highest and the lowest revelled,
And madness feasted upon Nature's heart
In woe apart,
And all alike at last was rudely levelled ;

The red rose maid, the splendid lie,
Were simply formed to sin and die.
And yet a whisper
From forlorn
Recesses and their half sealed book,
With every blade a separate lisper,
Gave me a larger look
And lifted me to views unborn ;
I marked, or thought I marked, beneath the
 wrangling
And bitter contest of the ceaseless wrath
A secret path
Away from horrors of the dumb dread strangling,
Done in that silent nameless woe,
Where each thing was the other's foe.
I saw a glimmer,
Then a gleam,
Which brightened to the perfect glow
And broadened through the spaces dimmer
To something more than dream,
Till sight was light above, below ;
I found the evil and the troubled tossings
Were but the desperate struggle to be free
And climb to Thee,
O Father, if by crimes and awful crossings ;
A needful passage of the flood,
That only purged through fire and blood.
I knew the losing,
And the fangs
Corroding breasts like rust,
Would be (if asked) each mortal's choosing
With all their precious pangs,
For hearts firm-rooted in pure trust ;
And but in flames of everlasting burnings,
The upward trial without stint or end
And death made friend,
Could we attain the height of fullest learnings—
Redeemed by tears and iron rod—
And man himself be truly God.

And there was pity
And its power
Deep in the writhings of dark clay,
Down in the murmur of the city,
Self-tortured into flower
And feeling after the noonday ;
Yea, love amid the sadness and the surging
Prevailed, though masked, with solemn miracle
Ineffable,
And gathered beauty from the scorn and scourging ;
For under penance of the earth and sky,
Throbbled out a sweet Necessity.

And the grim slaughter
Loud or mute
In wide creation, like a sword
Wreaking its lust on land and water,
Was but the Master's lute
Who touched at times a broken chord ;
The fear that stifled, and the staring anguish
In storms world-shaking and the tiny twinge,
Were but the fringe
Of that ascent by which to God we languish ;
And yet each teardrop fitted in,
The glorious suffering and the sin.

No longer puzzled,
I beheld
That dawning beam of destined scope,
Though hell itself seemed oft unmuzzled
With fury that rebelled
But yielded to the larger hope ;
And we who fought against our lot in blindness
Or tottered faintly from the reeling rank
And sullen sank,
Yet drew in every breath the inner kindness ;
The voice that cursed the fated strife,
Drank of its fulness very life.

And thus though stricken
Breast and brow,



And feebly clinging to my post,
While ordeals round me threatening thicken,
I read the enigma now
Exulting when I sorrow most ;
Thence only, not from cloister or by college,
Comes the serener philosophic sight
And orb'd light,
From clustering rays of all our broken knowledge ;
I am content to be, a part
Of that which is God's bleeding Heart.

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE.

My Heart and I—
We were resolved to conquer earth,
To meet its hate and direr mirth
And heart of stone, unarmed, alone—
If we should die—
Yet build of thought a lasting throne
Claspt by no vulgar golden girth,
Right in the Temple of the Gods
Above the passing periods —
The place of thunder,
Where wisdom with its fateful dower
Is more than peace and more than power,
And riddling life is rent asunder.
My heart and I,
We were resolved to do or die.

My heart and I—
We sought the Cities of the Plain
Re-risen and brighter from the slain,
And saw the years like ripened ears—
But did not die—
Go with their splendid faiths and fears,
To lighten other lands again ;
We battled with the burdening flesh,
And fainting still stood up afresh
Upon the mountain

Of refuge in its iron arms,
The stronger from the cheated charms,
And drinking of the muddled fountain.
My heart and I
Saw visions dark, and did not die.

My heart and I—
We hungered yet and journeyed on
And reached the mighty Babylon,
With turrets tall and ripe for fall—
But did not die—
And read the writing on the wall,
Uplifted with a doom foregone ;
We feasted like the revellers,
And watched with grey astrologers
The starry pages,
When on the mapt-out midnight sky
They tasted of Eternity,
And tracked the orbit of the ages.
My heart and I
Read awful truths, and did not die.

My heart and I—
We went to Egypt in the morn
Of history to get us corn,
And at her gates like frozen fates—
But did not die—
We marked a hundred vassal States,
That filled her flowing cup of scorn ;
The grave that locks in silent lids,
The secret of the Pyramids ;
The mystic teacher
That takes no lessons out of time,
In that stone pulpit above crime,
And is a text for every preacher.
My heart and I,
Enigmas too, yet did not die.

My heart and I—
We came to Athens in the sweet
Of moonlight, and at her fair feet

Sat gently down beneath her crown—
But did not die—
And talked of learning and renown,
The forms of things, in vision fleet
Which ranged through Space and under skies
Of blue, with young philosophies ;
The violet's bosom
Gave out its heart, the fancy shone,
And all the pillared Parthenon
Burst in a glory of white blossom.
My heart and I
Sat dreaming there, and did not die.

My heart and I—
We found a lodging place in Rome,
A world, but no sufficient home
Amid her throng and regal wrong—
But did not die—
And buildings fair as carven song,
Which bare up heaven upon their dome ;
We faced her wrath like ramping fire,
The crowned sin, the scarlet tire ;
From marble letters
We reaped no rest, with higher hopes
That laughed at earthly horoscopes—
The proudest piles were only fetters.
My heart and I
Endured the death, and did not die.

My heart and I—
We journeyed on, we travelled west
And suckled at the bloody breast
Without a name, with rites of shame—
But did not die—
And never touched the Fount of Fame,
In superstition black, unblest ;
We noted but the accursed might,
And dreadful knowledge with no light ;
The radiant revels,
Tremendous fanes, and crowded courts
Which storm-tost minds deemed pleasant ports,

Were but the glorious freaks of devils.
My heart and I
Escaped their tomb, and did not die.

My heart and I—
We saw the triumph of the Cross,
And in the new world's omphalos
Another bliss by Tamesis—
But did not die—
With man reborn, but made amiss
As by a science Setebos ;
Gigantic shows, a nightmare shade,
God wooed as partner in the trade—
A decent cover
To veil the fraud and monstrous vice,
And souls an easy sacrifice
To Fashion and the richest lover.
My heart and I
Long sickened there, and did not die.

My heart and I—
We humbly turned upon our track
With empty arms and voyaged back,
By sea and shore and city store—
But did not die—
And swore we would not wander more,
When all the harvest proved but lack ;
Low burned the candle now of life,
Betwixt its curtain and the strife ;
The little cottage
Still welcomed us with outstretched hands,
And love not found in storied lands
With holy kiss and mess of pottage.
My heart and I
Had weathered worlds, and did not die.

My heart and I—
We found the temple of the Gods,
Unsentinelled by sacred rods,
Or bolts and bars and cruel Mars—
But did not die—

Among the lesser earthly stars,
The heaven where hourly labour plods ;
It rose beneath the foot of trust,
And columned sprang from splendid dust ;
But red from slaughter
Or rank with lying breath of men,
Fame entered not our lowly ken
And everywhere was writ in water.
My heart and I
Abode in Truth, and did not die.

GENIUS IS WAITING.

I have waited for the morning and its finger white
Jewelled, with the last adorning free and infinite ;
Laid above my work of love and the long affliction,
Kindling all the heavy pall with its benediction ;
Through the night of every ill I have walked with weary
gait,
Seeking for the goal, and still I can wait.

I have waited—this is spoiling darkness of its fate,
And to be with God's own toiling consubstantiate ;
This is life in empty strife conquering the winner,
Working on when hope is gone as a new beginner ;
With the shadows grimly set round me like a prison
strait,
I have bravely fought, and yet I will wait.

THE SORROW OF IT.

It's O that there should ever be
This weary sound on earth and sea,
Which is the old world's leaven ;
And through wide Nature's troubled brain
Should throb the master pulse of pain,
Which thrills the path to Heaven ;
As if the labouring land and sky,
Finding no utterance but a cry,
Were some poor soul unshriven



And sought but nowhere heard reply
Save its own echoed agony,
Or would not be forgiven.

And yet it's well, the perfect note
In singing voice, and hand that wrote
Was always one sweet sadness ;
Which in each mortal thing held part,
And is the beating burning heart
Alike in mirth and madness ;
That thus by steps of holy grief
Man might attain a fairer fief
Than in the gift of gladness,
And life however poor and brief
Rise to its due divine relief
Purged from the dross and badness.

It's O that in the bosom's throe
Should be the accent of the woe
Which murmurs throughout Nature,
And on the morning's brow will weave
The prophecy of coming eve
To cloud its present stature ;
And struggle far and near for light
Dim yearnings that still vainly fight
With their dark judicature ;
And high and low the idle wings
Of youth, with fond imaginings
Disown their legislature.

And yet it's well, the onward track
Should lay a burden on the back
It broadens as it presses,
And anguish mingles with the cup
We drink who yet are climbing up
If but with awful guesses ;
And wails that long and lonely call,
Through every speech and space and all
That moves in mortal dresses.
For though the trouble must be sure,
It is its own exceeding cure
And with the blow it blesses.

Its O that everywhere the strain,
Like mourning, is dyed in the grain
And texture of creation ;
While suffering helpless throws a sigh
To Heaven which cannot stoop more nigh,
And asks a deaf salvation ;
That guiding Powers (if such) are dumb
To human care though cold and numb
Beneath the slow damnation,
Or lift us playthings up and tools
With systemed pangs through solemn schools
By ghastly education !

And yet it's well, it's very well
Hope should not be remote from hell
Nor Judas from the eleven ;
For pain must be the altar knife,
In mercy held, by which our life
Is still renewed when riven.
And souls that from their summits fell
In shadow for a while to dwell,
By shame are higher driven ;
While sorrow is our Matin bell
And then at evensong doth swell,
To ring us home to Heaven.

NEPENTHE.

I sit among the flowers at fancy's loom,
And fashion day and night
In visions of delight ;
To weave the glow of sunrise and the gloom
At midnight with the withered leaves and bloom,
For one great glamour'd sight.
I see the shadows pass upon the pictured grass,
And in the streams reflected dreams
As from a magic glass ;
They are more near and dimly dear
Than noontide's garish gleams.

And though men wonder why, I make new earth and
sky, and toil exceedingly.

For I have drunk the gods' nepenthe deep,
And look beyond the stars
Or these poor human bars,
Into the soft eternities of sleep ;
Below me mortals blindly crawl and creep,
And gather scorn and scars.
I know the inmost act is fiction and not fact,
And carven clay receives no ray
Until the bowl is crackt ;
The thought is thing, and carries Spring
Of everlasting day.
And though men wonder how, with sad and sicklied
brow I keep my sacred vow.

I catch the moment on its wing of grace
And pluck its soul of joy,
As from a jewelled toy,
Out of the rapture of its fleeting trace ;
Till flesh and bone with burning fires embrace,
Which blast yet not destroy.
The dew and dawn that fly are the reality,
In outward shapes the trick escapes
Which is Infinity ;
Time hath no part within that heart,
Which matter darkly drapes.
And though men wonder much, my destiny is such
and owns a higher touch.

I sit at fancy's web among the flowers,
And fashion sun and moon
Into a fairer noon ;
And of the purple shades and pearly showers
I build in crystal steps white temple towers,
A wonder and a boon.
They see the ragged ends but not the Form, that bends
My purpose bond to heights beyond
And ever upward tends ;

I plan and ply the tapestry,
Nor could in death despond.
And though men mark one side—the roughness, not the
pride—its glory is my guide.

WHAT IS THE VISION ?

Seer, what is the Vision ? Seer, what saith the Night,
Which on me derision pours, but is thy light ?
In those dreadful spaces where thy spirit walks
White, through native places, and with spirit talks ;
How, when awful being is the same as seeing,
Can this carnal mind
Steeped in common clay by its earthly way
Rest and refuge find ?
Clogged with spume and spatter but of sordid matter
Daily still more dense,
How can I adventure high
Dungeoned in the sense ?
Seer, what is the Vision
In thy land of light,
Which, to me derision,
Opens not its larger lot ?
Seer, what saith the Night ?

Seer, what is the reading of our riddle old ?
Whither is it leading man to fate untold ?
Far above the struggles which to us are death,
And a joy that juggles with deceiving breath ;
Thou, where act and thinking in one solemn linking
Marry ere they meet,
Dost securely go past the ebb and flow
Fair with travelled feet.
I, in this dull prison chained and unarisen,
Wonder at thy flight
Up beyond my lowly bond
And congenial night.

Seer, what is the reading
Of the riddling years?
Whither are they leading
Men who rust in kindred dust,
Through our dazzling fears?

THE LARK.

Incarnate song, thou wingèd flame,
Up in the unbounded sky
Which scarce can hold thy bursting frame,
Embodied ecstasy!
As in the ocean's blue water
Thou sailest on, sweet voyager,
Into eternity;
Yet bring us back the notes of heaven,
To be for earth the living leaven
Which only can refine,
And every clod with breath of God
Will glow and be Divine.

Dear traveller, thy foot is free
And walketh on the wind
By paths thine eye alone can see,
Which leave no track behind;
As though the sunshine of all space
Were, with its joy, in the embrace
Of thy small breast confin'd.
Sing on and in our hearts, and ever
With thy ascension hymn endeavour
To charm away our fears;
Till, lifted thus, we take with us
Thy music through the years.

LIFE AND DEATH.

Into the hidden world I came,
Where human footsteps may not pass;
I saw the secret of the flame,
And heard the growing of the grass.



I studied at the root of things
The fountains and the fashionings,
 Beyond this vision mortal ;
I marked each process working by,
The magic and the mystery,
 And oped the silent portal.
But at the bases of the years,
I found the well-spring was of tears.
In solemn chambers dim and deep
 I tracked the wonder of all life,
And learned the treasure stored by sleep
 Ere flowering into fruitful strife;
How song birds get their summer tune,
And roses steal the love of June
 To turn it into glory ;
And why the modest daisies blush,
Or rhythmic passion has a hush
 Even in the heart's mid story.
But, under tempest and the toy,
I found the inmost note was joy.
I drew the dazzling veil aside
 Which curtained Nature's region round,
I watched the grave's dark gates divide
 And pushed for ever back its bound.
But as my search went farther on
Another light through shadow shone,
 And blest my daring travel ;
The mighty wheels that move the globe
And murmur in its rustling robe,
 Had nothing now to ravel.
For sorrow seemed in gladness done,
And life and death were only one.

AT TIMES.

At times,
The morning and the noon
And in the magic of the moon,
Sweet thoughts from far like old remembered
 chimes

Return to me, and all my spirit flowers
Into the bliss of unforgotten bowers ;
I hear
The mystic murmur of the song
Which sends the rolling world along,
In ecstasy of dumb delicious fear ;
And as the great walls rock and sunder,
I learn the secret of the thunder.

I see
Through this dull prison clay
Which clouds and bars the better way,
And as the will awakes the life is free ;
For at the flutter of my captive pinions,
Space opens wide to me its grand dominions.
And when
In drowsy moods of pleasant dream
I see the distant porches gleam,
It is the visit of my native ken ;
I feel my wings that would be flying
From earth's brute discord and denying.

O yes,
I whisper in thine ear,
True friend, and not without a tear,
Even I have seen God's naked loveliness ;
And He, when I with doubts am ridden,
Hath shown to me the fane forbidden.
His love
Doth wrap me most divinely round
And tuck me in with tender sound,
And clothe me warmly as a bloom's white glove.
It is as near as red to roses,
And on my heart like dew reposes.

When ill
Of wrong or danger falls,
And siren music to me calls,
He is the same and cometh closer still ;
Betwixt me and the dear temptation,
He sets His richer revelation.

He spares
No joy by which the spirit lives,
And like a gentlest Mother gives
To me the Bosom which He freely bares.
And, drawing from those blessed fountains,
I stand with Him on virgin mountains.

THE NEW WORLD.

Yes, they told me I was steering, as the angry wind went
veering,
On a rude and rocky shore
With the breakers on my lee ;
And old mariners, whose faces had found grim and
rugged graces
In the waves and wondrous lore,
Long had counselled I must flee.
They had washed them in the ocean's brine, and felt
the maddest motions
Of the tempest in its track, when it scattered wrath and
wrack ;
They were salted souls and true, and had learned the
water's clue,
But the boldest of them shuddered as I shook out
reefs, unruddered,
And to shelter turned my back—
For the death or glory's due.
But I stayed not, and the thralling of a sure and secret
calling
Drew me coldly, blithely on
To the triumph or the doom.
And the warning was not needed, and the wishes fell
unheeded,
Though no sunshine ever shone
Through the thwart and solid gloom.
For I heard the mystic voices and despised the meaner
choices
Which put safety before light and the knowledge that
is might ;

And I saw no portal yet in the perils that beset,
As I took the crested billow at its flood and gained a
pillow
Which was balm unto my flight—
And the pain I did forget.

With a music as of thunder, lo, I ploughed the surf
asunder,
Lifted gladly with the tide
As a king upon a throne ;
And the scudding spray beat yellow on my brow, and
with a bellow
Leapt the breaker in its pride,
Like a beast with baffled tone.
But I reached the glorious haven, and beneath me like
a paven
Road the surges for me spread drift of dying things and
dead,
While their enmity was aid and about me kindly laid ;
I seemed coming to a splendid feast by every power
attended,
Earth was brighter for my tread
With its blossoms' tangled braid.

But the ship that bravely carried me, and was so sorely
harried
By the buffets of the storm,
Now was conquered at the last ;
And it lay in fragments broken, a poor silent toy and
token
Of the grand imperial form,
And a bye-word of the blast.
It had done the simple duty when it bore me in its
beauty
To the harbour I would seek, and then sank down spent
and meek,
With the service and the joy that no ruin could destroy ;
Part was tumbled with the shingle, part was glad in
peace to mingle

With the muddy ooze and reek—
But in God for God's employ.

Ah, I found the kingdom sodden with my blood was soil
 untrodden
 And a virgin land and sweet
 Rich with every valued spoil ;
And its fields unmapt, unbounded, with familiar strains
 resounded
 In a welcome new and meet,
 And it fruited without toil.
Never yet had gallant mortal passed the dim and
 dreadsome portal
Which concealed such dainty store, silver song and
 golden ore
And the royal pearls and gems fit for bridal vesture
 hems ;
I had won the treasure hidden by the ages and
 forbidden,
 Just because I loved it more—
 Truth, not empty diadems.

But the harvest and the winning were my end, though
 the beginning
 Of a better time for man,
 And his cradle was my grave ;
For its ploughing thus divided what had else the years
 derided,
 And the sowing if a span
 Was the life my body gave. ➤
And the thoughts that cannot perish which the nations
 dearly cherish,
I did offer as the price beyond rubies and rare spice ;
And they burst the sealed door, and left the abyss a
 floor
Where enfranchised peoples gaily take their will and
 pastime daily,
 On the unknown sacrifice—
 And no lot is longer poor.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOOR.

O it was not in the morning that my darling came
to me,

In her young and shy adorning that was wonderful to
see;

And it was not in the noonlight, or the madness of the
moonlight

With its sad and silver flame—

But she came.

She looked earthly but not human

And so full of pretty ways,

Like a mingling of wild roses and the honeysuckle's
poses

With invisible warm rays ;

Speaking gently to the true man,

Of the vanished elder days.

Still the drowsy land lay sleeping in the kisses of the
sun,

And a fairy form was peeping from a foxglove, as a nun
Out of her coy lattice curtain pries with timid brow
uncertain,

To behold what she should shun ;

When with wisping and a lispig,

As if all the leaves were crisping

And in love and laughter some,

She did come.

She was clothed in purple shadow and the gossamer
and dew,

And the glory of the meadow in its fragrance fresh and
new,

When the buttercup is yellow and the celandine its
fellow,

And the daisy like a star

Shines afar.

She had something of the Dryad

With loose amber-coloured hair,

And in one hand was a thistle's ruddy blossom with it
bristles,

Like a sceptre's solemn air ;

She had something of the Naiad,
And her mocking face was fair.
From an oak I thought she started, as I sat and lightly
dreamed,
And the space before me parted when upon my youth
she gleamed,
While her bosom heaved as panting and her eyes of all
enchanting
With unriddled beauties beamed.
In a gliding and a sliding
Fashion as if from me hiding,
Moved the murmur of her feet
Bare and sweet.

O the rapture of the vision conquered me at once, and
fell
In a touch of fond derision on my spirit with a spell ;
All the life within me rallied as she looked at me and
dallied
With my passion as a glove,
Into love.
And the scent of her soft vesture
Had the richness, that the soil
Grants the worker with his harrow when it pays its
meat and marrow
To his care and kindly toil ;
And round *me*, with many a gesture,
Did she weave a magic coil.
For she waxed more bright, and nearer drew those
pure and perfumed charms,
Growing whiter, warmer, clearer, and without a hint
of harms ;
And the doubt that might have shielded me turned into
trust and yielded,
Till I melted in her arms.
And her glances woke the dances
Of old dear and dead romances,
In the tumult of my heart—
Worlds apart.



And what passed then no confession could disburden
if I tried ;
In the truth of that transgression, I was crowned and
crucified.
For between us yet the thistle's head thrust out its
armed bristles,
As denying what she gave
Like the grave.
And to me those heather billows
Now no longer may be poor,
For they found me subtle traces and they showed
departed graces
While they still unlock a door ;
And hot breasts that are my pillows,
Tell the secrets of the Moor.
And we often mix, and higher grow our natures, and
each morn
Sees my gladness lifted higher as to better solace born ;
But in spite of many a meeting, after each last farewell
greeting
She bequeaths me just a thorn.
And though flowers build me bowers,
As all treasures lend their dowers,
There abides of every sheaf
One sere leaf.





SECTION III.

Kingdom of the Cross.

ASCRPTION.

O immutable
And inscrutable
 Awful Deity,
Thou adorable
Unexplorable
 Spontaneity !

In the treasure full,
In the measure full
 Of Thy latitude,
Touch my littleness,
Heal my brittleness
 And ingratitude.

From Divinity's
Fair infinities,
 Though by loss-bearing,
Raise my neediness
To the exceedingness
 Of Thy cross-bearing.

O Thou Beautiful,
Make me dutiful—
 All that ails in me ;
With Thy fashioning
Wrought by passioning,
 Drive Thy nails in me.

INVOCATION.

Speak to me, Holy One, speaking in love,
Come to me, Lowly One, come from above,
Down to my weaknesses, down to my sin ;
Mould me with meeknesses, new-made within.
Lift me and leaven me righteous and pure,
Lift to Thy Heaven me cleansed and secure ;
Breathe as the wind on me, breath on my face
Airs as of Ind on me, odorous grace.
Burn as the fire in me, burn up the dross,
Kindle desire in me true to the Cross ;
Flow as the ocean full, strong as Thou art,
Fill with devotion full sweetly my heart.
Through little lips of mine, stammering, weak,
Purged from eclipse of mine, mightily speak ;
Quicken the blindnesses, scatter the haze,
With Thy clear kindnesses open my gaze.
Dim is my hearkening, deaf with the choice
Of this world's darkening, waiting Thy voice.
Crown my unmeetnesses with Thy own might,
With Thy completenesses perfect my sight.
Show me myself, O God, brighten the book
Of that dark shelf, O God, every dark nook ;
Unveil Thy Being, Lord, dearer than day,
Better than seeing, Lord, light'ning the way ;
Bear me, through billowing waters that toss,
Safe to Thy pillowing, Home to the Cross.
Cover this nakedness (as the wide globe)
With new awakedness under Thy robe,
Fitting most feelingly to each dark stain
As I go reelingly bowed with my pain.
Form of Thy witnesses *me* to endure
Sealed with the fitnesses Thou dost assure,
Stript of all vanities weighing me down
For Thy humanity's clothing and crown—
Garments of glorious uses and art
Proved and victorious mail for my heart.
Deal with me tenderly, armour my life
Feeble and slenderly fashioned for strife,

Fence it with graciousness flowing from Thee
Out of Thy spaciousness wonderful, free ;
Safe from the rancour and evil and dross,
Build me and anchor and nail to the Cross.

THE CRIMSON CROSS.

"The Cross leads generations on."—*Shelley*.

I saw a Crimson Cross set on a bitter hill,
The red sun hid his face, the troubled earth stood still,
While all the powers of hell worked out their wicked
will.

Upon it hung a Form, with hands upraised to bless
The murderous foes whose sins He suffered to redress,
In crowned and conquering woe an awful Loveliness.

And from each pleading wound that opened scarlet lips
The great drops trickled down on spearheads' iron tips,
And all but that dear Face was robed in dread eclipse.

But round the Cross there rolled a ghastly shadowed
shine,
That showed the features yet and every tortured line
Bathed in the Love that filled those Human eyes
Divine.

The darkness like a sea washed on with stifling waves
Against it, and behold ! from rended rocky caves,
Upstart all the sheeted dead in dusty graves.

And out of every tomb and dim unquiet deep,
The buried things of ages left their haunted sleep,
And came as ghostly shapes around the Cross to weep.

A fearful silence gathered up the world, and slid
Upon each waiting heart, like death itself, and hid
And hushed the stormy beats as with a coffin lid.

The very birds were dumb and frozen in mid song
Beneath the crushing pall of that gigantic wrong,
Which with consenting Heaven and earth grew fresh
and strong.

A horror crept from brow to brow in cursèd might,
With muttered oaths and agony of bane and blight,
And in the aching breast was shadow more than night.

But there that patient Figure in the blasting ray
Which fell on Him alone as with a dawnèd day,
Still stood with outstretched hands that seemed to
watch and pray.

And from His withered Face and from His wounded side
Compassion writ with blood welled in a saving tide,
Around His foes and slayers in their palaced pride.

And then, as He in lone unutterable shame
Hung on the Crimson Cross with spent and bleeding
frame,

A solitary Bird to Him with succour came.

Though it could do but little and in strength was weak,
And had no helping arm nor word of hope to speak,
It brought a drop of dew within its tiny beak.

It touched the fevered lips that were so white and worn,
And for a moment cooled the forehead pierced and torn,
But tried and tried in vain to break one cruel thorn.

And on the panting bosom one red drop was shed
That fell in benediction from that holy Head,
And would have quickened dust that lay for centuries
dead.

But now the Blessèd Bird for ever wears the mark
As witness to the Truth in every region dark,
And flashes through all time its clear and crimson spark.

And, lo, when that sweet act of tender aid was done
Which made the earth and Heaven and man and Nature
one,

God smiled in unveiled love upon His dying Son.

And on the quaking rocks and to the curtained sky
Rang out in solemn stillness one great Conqueror's cry,
Which opened up a door into eternity.

But, when I looked again, the Sacred Form was gone
And through the shadow of a Cross the sunlight shone,
While the world's groaning wheels went grinding dimly
on.

And, ah, a thin red streak which nothing now could stay
Rose from the awful ground which hallowed ever lay,
And through all years and tears pursued its precious
way.

Forth ran that weary dread discomfortable Path
And over it the sky stooped in one cloud of wrath,
For bitter was the fruit though rich the aftermath.

It started from the Cross, as in the veined flesh
With every nerve that throbs throughout that living
mesh

A ruddy gash is cut and staunchèd and bleeds afresh.

At first the Path of Pain seemed faltering and faint,
And though it travelled on unturned by evil's taint
Yet it was paved with bones of many a martyred saint.

O maidens bright and pure were pilgrims on the track,
And when the boding air with death and doom was
black

They still went humbly forth and never one looked
back.

But oft they gave their gentle bodies to the foe
And suffered nameless wrong, and as with earthquake
throe,

Exhaled sweet lives as flowers upon that way of woe.

A tide of troubled figures as in tossing waves,
The old and young and queens and kings and crownèd
slaves

Rolled down that dreary road and only left their graves.

It gathered everywhere recruits from all the climes,
And filled the broken ranks with soldiers from new
times,

While in their happy ears rang blessèd Christmas chimes.

And as one pilgrim fell yet others in his place
Stept without stay or fear and broadened out the space,
And radiant was the Cross writ on each upturned face.

The sinking handed on his message to the next,
His shield of faith and sword, his tomb became a text
Of comfort to the weak and hope to hearts perplex.

They ate the bread of sorrow, drank the cup of tears
And spread their table in a wilderness of fears,
But more and mightier grew with hate and hostile years.

They followed no false god of dazzling dream or wraith
But harkened only to the Word the Scripture saith,
And were content with wounds if in the fight of faith.

And wider waxed the road, and brighter burnt the fire,
Which flashed from altars white and calm to Heaven a
 spire
Of beaconing beauty and an infinite desire.

For hoary-headed men and tottering children came,
And with their ministering blood they fed the flame
Which looked more glorious even beneath the shade of
 shame.

But higher rose the Path and clearer was it spread,
No more a doubtful track or tiny crimson thread,
It ran and shone betwixt the dying and the dead.

And as it moved it purged the gold from dusky dross,
It gleaned fair jewels out of empty waste and loss,
And every milestone in it was a Crimson Cross.

But as I gazed, behold, the bitter pain was joy,
The thorns and flints were roses that could never cloy,
And martyrdom was gain and earth an idle toy.

The robe of torture was a glad angelic dress,
The cutting sword a kiss, the rack but God's caress,
And killing scathe of scorn a crown of righteousness.

The ugly angry clouds like Azrael's wings took flight,
And all that seemed most wrong became Divinely right,
The grave a portal opening into Peace and Light.

I saw throughout the lands and blazoned on the sky
That holy Crimson Cross, when suns and moons went
by,

Unto the end of time, from all eternity.

It was the pledge and seal of everlasting Love,
In hecatombs of men and in the murdered dove,
In great and small a witness to the God above.

I marked it sculptured in the trees, and in the frame
Of universal Nature stamped in stone the same,
And painted on the clouds and unconsumed in flame.

For none could raise the house to be his mortal home,
And none could bathe in blue the temple's climbing
dome,

Unless he signed the Cross read in the Blessèd Tome.

And none could set his hand to pleasure or to toil,
Or build the living book or pluck from fields their spoil,
Without the shadow of the Cross on page and soil.

For all the earth with all the splendour and the spice,
Was purchased with the Blood and at tremendous price,
And founded on the Cross of solemn sacrifice.

Ah, no two hands could join without the sacred sign,
And no two hearts be one without its pain benign,
And none without the Cross escape the world malign.

It was the latest word—the Cross—it was the first,
And yielding to its law alone could quench our thirst,
Or make the fountains from the stony desert burst.

It was the final form below all other shapes,
The thought beneath the thorn, the acid in the grapes,
The Cross behind the harbour stood on stormy capes.

The monarch who would rule was sceptred with its
power,

The Cross gave drudges tools and wisdom's grandest
dower—

Beyond the farthest dreams and in the fairest bower.

**And mounted yet the Path beyond each fear and frown,
While from its track fell rain of richest mercies down,
Till lost in light the Cross of Glory looked a Crown.**

Under crimson skies of sunset did the little child go
forth,
But his sorrow with him went
And a holy discontent,
And he turned his glances southward and he looked
into the north ;
For the royal sun was dying
Like a hero in a battle-field and on a gory bed,
And a restless wind was crying
Like a sin that cannot slumber though with darkness
on it shed ;

And his eyes were full of visions and his heart was big
 with prayer
 While he sought some other toy,
 That would be a lasting joy
And defeat the coming shadow and the curse of Time
 the Slayer.

O he dwelt upon the east and ranged abroad throughout
 the west,
 With a weariness of soul
 That thus early took its toll,
In the waking of the windows and the budding of the
 breast ;

 For the day had left him nothing,
Though it gave him only blisses of its blossom and its
 dew ;

 And a surfeit as of lothing
Now possess him, as he sadly asked for pleasure yet
 anew ;

Till his baby hands discovered all but one thing was a
 loss,

 And it sank into his life
 With its emptiness and strife,
When he read on the horizon as in fire the sacred Cross.

It was written on his forehead and engraven on his
 hand,

 But the sunset on him lay
 From the breaking of the day,
And it breathed a mask of mourning for the brightness
 of the land ;

 While he asked of all a token
That would lead him on his journey and might be a
 certain sign,

 Just a word of helping spoken
Or a miracle of promise where the portents seemed
 malign ;

And around him every beacon looked misguiding as he
 moved,

 Like a traveller whose gaze
 Cannot pierce the closing haze,

And goes doubtfully and dimly forth by stages still
unproved.

It was sculptured in his bosom and was mingled with
his blood,
And the iron entered far ;
It eclipsed the very star,
And lay under the foundations and kept purging with
the flood ;
But he could not read the writing,
While he bent so low and earthward and found treasures
in the dust ;
Till he felt a true delighting,
In the beauty of affliction and the blindnesses of trust ;
And he saw it then behind the flower and then beneath
the gloss
Of the purple and the pride,
As a comrade at his side,
And he found the key of mysteries was in the sacred
Cross.

There was light upon the meadow and a glory girt the
mount,
But a burden on her prest
As a serpent at the breast,
Though she gathered gold of buttercups and drank the
silver fount ;
And not sweet to her the manna
Of the wilderness that fell around and gave her daily
food,
For she needed yet a banner
That would shine before the shadowed way and cheer
her every mood ;
And she sought it in the breezes of each passing hope or
whim,
She pursued it too in gain,
And inquired for it in vain
Of the cup of nectared happiness that overflowed its
brim.



But the thorn was in her paradise, the thistle at her feet,
And the cruel pavement stones
Where the sorrows sat on thrones,
Told the same thing in the murmur of the brazen-
throated street ;
And with clear prophetic waving
The one flag it flew before her on the cloud-land and
the wind,
And in readiness of saving
It encompassed like an atmosphere and followed her
behind ;
Till at last she read the message of the cedar and the
moss,
In the greatest and the least,
At the funeral and feast,
And was bathed through all her being gladly in the
sacred Cross.

They were few and they were lowly and yet beautiful
and free,
Though a curtain as if cut
Out of ebony had shut
All the avenues around them and left portal none to see ;
So they asked but for a rifting
In the weary walls of darkness and a glimpse of guiding
blue,
With a reverent uplifting
Of the hands that craved the Fatherhood and could not
find a clue ;
O they bowed upon the threshold of the awful and
unknown
With the sacrifice of tears,
And dim services of fears,
While their idols now were shattered and the altars
overthrown.

On their knees they begged for mercy and epiphany of
might
That would strengthen them for toil,
And wash off the sinful soil

With the cleansing of compassion, and awake the
inward light.

But there came no voice of pity
From the silence of the cloister and the secret of the
shrine

Or the madness of the City,
Though they felt the God was near them and they were
themselves Divine ;

Till a door within them opened and behind the veil of
dross,

They beheld the seal of Truth,
Which bestows on worlds their youth,
And the heavenward-pointing finger of the sad and
sacred Cross.

Lo, he leant across the centuries with pale prophetic
glance,

In his passion for some thought
Upon fiery anvils wrought,
Which would solve the endless riddle of dear life and its
romance ;

A fit watchword for wise telling,
And a battle-cry to weld the nations on a common ground
After idle sentinelling

Of the seekers and the sages, one which all could rally
round ;

And he wanted just a lightning line or thundering
phrase of flame,

Which might marry to the real
The impossible ideal,
And unite the gray philosophies and future in one name.

But none answered him, no signal flashed athwart the
sullen sky

But his own reflected part,
And the beating of his heart
Was the only echo wafted from the dumb eternity ;

And he read his lifetime's pages
In the wrinkled mist that crept beneath the summit
where he stood,

And a curse upon the stages

Of his brother and above the glory of bright woman-
hood;
Till he saw on humble Calvaries where billows tear and
toss,
And embraced within his soul
As his guidance and control,
The red beauty of the nails and kissing of the sacred
Cross.

THE CROSS.

THE MEASURE OF LOVE.

There is no measure like the Cross,
There is no measure so,
Which is as infinite in loss
And as exceeding low;
It probes into the poisonous leaven
Of evil's awful spell,
It is as high as highest Heaven,
It is as deep as hell.
Ah, if I were Almighty God
Who suffered sore for us,
And He the crawling worm I trod,
I would not measure thus.

There is no measure like the rule
Which meted God our dearth,
And carries all the joys of Yule
Like sunshine round the earth;
Bought for us at tremendous price
And daily, hourly pangs,
In that perpetual Sacrifice
Where God the Victim hangs;
For O not once or twice alone
In agony He died,
He ever reigns upon that Throne
For us the Crucified.

There is no measure like that tree
Of dreadful living death,
Upraised for sinners whereon He
For us draws dying breath ;
And every soul that passes by
His mercy signs His doom,
And every spot is Calvary
Where Jesus finds no room.
But if I were Almighty God,
And He the midge below
A moment playing o'er the sod,
I would not measure so.

There is no measure like the span
Of God's most boundless Love,
Which took the squalid home in man
And gave him all above ;
That chose the littleness and debt
And dolorous bounds of sin,
And purged that prison floor and set
Eternity within ;
And though a thousand times cast out
A thousand times He yearns
For us, despite the hate and doubt,
And to His shame returns.

There is no measure like that prayer
For these dim rebel lands,
Which still for ill and God's own slayer
Uplifts the nailed hands ;
It bears all cruelty and scorn
To wipe away one tear,
It wears for crime the crownèd thorn
And leans upon the spear.
But if I were Almighty God
And He my bitterest foe,
Condemned but to the judgment rod,
I would not measure so.

There is no measure like that Heart
Of the Most Holy One,

Which bled so for the wicked part
Which only we had done ;
Which bleeds for ever, as we drive
The wounds of torture deep,
With direr woes He came to shrive,
And sorrow He must keep ;
That things of darkness and the dust,
As bubbles on the tide,
May find a refuge they can trust
Safe in His riven side.

There is no measure like the Cross
Which reaches through all time,
To purge the golden ore from dross,
And gathers of each clime ;
There is no measure like the Love
Of the Thrice-Blessed Lord,
Who plants us on His seat above
While smitten by our sword.
Ah, if I were Almighty God
And He with murderer's blow
Struck at me from earth's puny clod,
I would not measure so.

THE CROSS.

THE MEASURE OF SIN.

When the name that is known not in Heaven was heard
And the eyes of the angels grew dim,
While the River of Life in its fountain was stirred
Till the waters washed over their brim ;
When the word that is nameless,
The word that is woe
For a season of night entered in ;
When the thing that is shameless
And every one's foe
Threw a shadow on all and was Sin ;
Then the breast of the Father was torn with a
throe,
As He felt the downfallen akin.

Ah, the evil and erring was yet His own child
And begotten in beauty and joy,
Upon whom at His birth He had tenderly smil'd
And endowed with the earth as a toy ;
 But the root that is bitter,
 The root that is bane
Now laid hold of humanity's heart,
And the glamour and glitter
 Were turned into pain
And the pleasure no less had a smart ;
 But in all of the curse, with its sorrow and
 chain,
God Himself had a terrible part.

It was not that His playmate, His darling, His pride
And the crown of the blossoming years,
Now was blighted and wandered away from His side
And sought fellowship rather with tears ;
 But the wrong that is cruel,
 The wrong that is grief
Had come home to the Father who gave,
And the bliss in His jewel
 Was troubled and brief,
And between them lay death and the grave ;
 Though He knew what alone could redeem
 with relief,
And the hope that was mighty to save.

Ah, the will of his creature so righteously plann'd,
And enriched with the exquisite flower
Of all possible tributes of sea and the land,
Was now set against Him and His dower ;
 And the cup that is broken,
 The cup that is spilt
Had been chosen by man for his aid,
And the deed with its token
 Of darkness and guilt
Fell in blight on foundations He laid ;
 And the temple to rise must in blood be re-
 built,
When the sentence of mercy was said.

For the sin in its infinite compass cried out
For a Sacrifice that was no less,
When from earth in its bonds came the conquering shout
Of the wrong still defying redress ;
And the light that is error,
The light that is dark,
Had dethroned the bright truth of the day,
And the shadow of terror
Had curtained the Ark,
And the leaders were farthest astray ;
But they looked not above for the beaconing
mark,
And they looked not below at the way.
So the counsels that are of Eternity bade
That the Highest must meekliest lie,
And the Blessed who lived in the children He made
Must alone for their trespasses die ;
And the One who is Holy,
The One who is kin
To all beauty must bear all the loss,
And be reckoned most lowly
And Himself become Sin,
That His children be purged from their dross ;
But, behold, when He knocked they would
scarce let Him in,
And then gave Him as Kingdom the Cross.

ONE STEP OUT OF SELF INTO CHRIST.

“And immediately the ship was at the land, whither
they went.”—John vi. 21.

The Lord came to me in the middle night
In light,
Although I saw and served Him ill, and spake
“Awake !
Gird up thy loins and take thy pilgrim lamp,
For damp
And dark the journey is, and yet not long
With song ;

But likewise hold thy staff, and fill with praise
And raise
Thy heart to Me and never once look back,
Though black
And endless seem the chill and rugged road
Or load."
Then I arose and trimmed my lamp and went
Content
With Him, and lightly left with praise and staff
The chaff
And husks and evil pleasures of the earth,
That dearth
And want became at length and crying woe ;
But, lo,
The first wave of my voyage was the last,
And cast
My weakness on my Saviour and my Friend—
The End.

“WHERE IS HE ?”

A Christophany.

“Where is He ?” So I questioned who would be
His slave, and silence answered, “Where is He ?”
I was no priest or prophet and no king
With iron sceptre, but a wanderling
Astray upon the mountains of the night,
And vainly groping for a ray of light—
Somehow and somewhere in the curtained cloud,
Which was at once my shelter and my shroud—
Without one human grace or humble gift,
And seeking just a glimmer or blue rift
For the dark earth that mocked my stumbling tread,
In those great heavens of gray, dumb overhead.
I had no knowledge but a child-like love,
That simply prayed and stretched dim hands above,
Against the veil that blurred God’s miracle,
To the Unknown and the Unknowable ;

I had no treasure, but a little trust
Which trembled upward like a flame, from dust
And masquerades of mist and the deep dense
Phantasmagoria of fallacious sense,
As to its native skies ; I had no guide,
But my own shadow walking at my side ;
I had no hope, that might a moment save,
But the dear refuge of no distant grave ;
I had no Christ, of whom with hopeless tears
I sought a vision through unverdant years
So mute and dreadful, harvesting but loss,
Where all was care, and every thought a cross,
That married me to woe's unuttered wail,
And each desire a thorn, each step a nail.
But yet I could not live without my Lord,
And though the pathway to Him were a sword
Which I must walk alone, one awful edge
Of cold keen suffering, or some toppling ledge
By precipices pale, still would I dare
To go or climb if none therein had share
With me. I asked the ruddy rolling sphere,
And its response came back, "*He is not here.*"
I asked the ocean, where I kept vain tryst,
And stormy waiting for the Blessed Christ,
If in those purple palaces His lot
Was cast, and it replied, "*I know Him not.*"
I asked the eagle on his royal path
A flying bolt of ruin and of wrath,
Free of the earth and water and the air
In solitary silence fierce and fair,
Whose eyes were all ablaze with battle sheen ;
But still the answer was, "I have not seen
In halls of space a Master and the joy
Of thy redemption—I, like death, destroy."
I asked the roses reddening in the sun,
And laughing at the beauty scarce begun
By right Divine, that had save grace no choice ;
And they replied, "We have not heard His voice."
I asked the pilgrim of the world, the wind,
Which breathes of Arctic frost and flowers of Ind,

And makes the earth with song and perfume sweet,
But finds no place to rest its romping feet ;
Which whispered, "Though my travellings are much,
I have not felt the impress of His touch."

* * * *

I sought Him in the churches, where the spot
Of carnal ease had fallen, and found Him not—
My Beautiful, my Love, my King, my Life ;
I found but foolish babblement and strife
Of consentaneous folly and wild screeds,
And in mock thunder dead or dying creeds.
The wardens of the word and oracles
Spake in cheap wit or vulgar parables,
And charmed their hearers with mere tinkling chimes,
But had no trumpet message for the times
To stir dry bones that rotted in their shame,
And bid souls live and set the world aflame.
While I consumed with struggling need and stress
Would offer Him in utter brokenness
My heart, myself, my all, to keep Him in,
But knew not where for the besetting sin
I might attain a strength to help me stand—
The healing balm of His besetting Hand.
I sought Him in the Senate, where the law
Flowed from its ancient fountain head of awe
In justice, and most reverend right and use
With fertilising streams of power profuse,
Watered the nations as they came to drink,
And shed new life on nations prone to sink
Foredoomed and pass ; I saw with fair intents
The mighty mother of all parliaments,
Dispensing measures broadcast through the land,
With equal aim and catholic command,
Built on base of precedent and rock ;
I saw with wonder, from the undying stock
New constitutions bud in festival
Of fervid youth and force magnifical,
A grander growth ; I saw the wide earth mount
To vaster summits, from that one great fount

Revived ; but, ah, I did not see my Lord,
Who gave those charters all their sweet accord
And liberties their latitude. I sought
Again in the calm cloistered world of thought,
Where pale and pensive students with the stamp
Of high imperial learning trimmed the lamp
That lit the ages, and led countries on
From unhewn stone to stately Parthenon,
And pillared books with bards' tremendous line
Compact of fire and tears and white moonshine,
And marble might of loveliness, and stairs
Of mist and silence blown about with airs,
Like incense out of columned courts—the lore
Spreading as waves, that sap an iron shore,
And never can be spent. I noted how
The kindling eye and broad contagious brow
Caught every gleam of Truth and flashed it forth,
As the Aurora flaming in the north,
From heart to heart and made serener skies
And other earths with fresh philosophies,
The old writ larger ; and I noted still
The passion of the consecrated will,
Vowed as a Vestal to the holy Truth
And thence repairing evermore its youth,
A-burning in the frail devoted form
That could not veil the fire's translucent storm,
As some sweet altar in a shadowed shrine
Dreadful with hidden majesty Divine,
With all around it solemnly illumed,
And all within it bright and unconsumed ;
But Him I noted not, who is the Light
Of every world that but reflects His sight.
I sought Him in the market-place, where greed
Pastured on helpless ignorance or need,
Outbidding and outbawling poor men's pains,
And with its muck-rake heaped the loathsome gains
That were stark losses, preying on the weak
Who starved and struggled nor had voice to speak.
I marked the sweater gorged with blood and fat
With tears of orphans, and the plutocrat—

The monster deaf and blind as death and cold,
A brute machine for coining cursed gold
From lives of murdered men and women—filled
With plunder, but not satisfied, not stilled ;
I marked the fraud in fashion, honoured, crowned,
When unexposed and lofty, though it drowned
Its myriads in a sea of damned despair,
And unimagined ruin past repair ;
I marked the triumph of the chartered knaves
Whose gilded progress lay o'er open graves
Grim, and the lady's dress of purple proud,
And precious which had been a sister's shroud ;
But Him I found not anywhere in all.
I sought Him in the stable, at the stall,
Where once He laid His little Baby Head,
Though with the terrors of the Godhood spread
About it still ; but O, He was not there,
Whose virtue yet I knew ranged everywhere
Pervading and compelling with kind power
The rolling planet and the radiant flower
In fragrance and in light ; I met Him not,
The Chief among ten thousand, with no spot
Or shadow of a stain upon His dress
Of un conjecturable holiness ;
I felt His Beauty, but I could not touch
The uttermost sweet hem I sought so much
With care and prayer. No vestige of His tread
Among the brutes for whom His Blood was shed,
His covenanted creatures ; but the strife
Of bastard science, and the crimson knife
That carved its fatal conquests on the flesh
Of hopeless bleeding lives, and carved afresh
Its hideous blots and blunders, to apply
The shame of some poor shambling theory
And pluck from nameless horrors what might suit
Or riot on the old forbidden fruit,
With services of ghastly hecatombs
Offered to Moloch in grim catacombs.
I sought Him in the teardrop's costly gem,
The red light lingering on the fir tree stem,

The cry of hunted anguish low and long,
The wood dove crooning its wild evensong,
In windy ways of sea, in man and beast,
At gloomy fast and at the glittering feast,
In pomp and pageant and the funeral,
Through mocking loves and hates majestic;
But though I wandered far, and kept a tryst
With death itself, I could not see the Christ.

* * * *

I sought Him humbly with heart-broken pleas
By the soft murmur of untravelled seas,
And over mountains and gray desert sands
Where rocks arose and stretched forbidding hands
Like skeletons; I asked the land and sky,
But vainly—till I came to Calvary,
By bitter roads that led through doors of loss,
Where hung the shadow of a shameful Cross
Betwixt the heaven and earth, and on it still
The Sacrifice of Love and subject Will,
Lashed by strange winds that seemed at angry strife,
He whose perpetual death is all our Life,
For whom remained no less or diverse plan,
The dying God and the undying Man
In unimaginable sorrow bent,
But more than Conqueror now and most content,
Within that awful darkness which is Light
To us, and every universe of night
With robes of suffering woe and sin enwrapt
In systems undiscovered and unmapt;
The service of the Priest who offers up
Himself, and drinks alone the dreadful cup
Of anguish and fierce overflowing wine
In innocence of human joy divine;
Who saveth others from the yawning grave,
Eternity's black mouth, but cannot save
Himself and will not, though by tortures tried—
My Beautiful, the Ever-Crucified.
I found Him, where I left Him long ago,
Nailed to the Cross which is our guide below

And beacon lamp and refuge from the storm,
While His great Passion shook the gentle Form
That yet embraced and chose with loving breath
The agony of endless living Death.

* * * *

There I renewed my vows at wells of Truth
And washed in waters of immortal youth,
When through the gateway of the grave I went
And passed to Life and that august ascent
Of resurrection and the holy ground,
And dropt behind me every chain and bound.
But then my eyes were opened, and I saw
That solemn spectacle of bliss and awe,
Christ on the Cross in every lot and land,
The wounded Side, the pierced outspreading Hand
In benediction that could only thus
At this stupendous price be bought for us,
But by the Blood of God who cannot err—
Most willing and most sinless Sufferer.
And every milestone marked by love and loss,
Which led to Him was just the Sacred Cross;
There was no other signpost through the dark,
Save this one witness of our Hierarch.
I saw it in the sunshine of the throne,
For there He hung uncared-for and alone,
While all the cruel splendour babbled by
And left The King in stark extremity
Of solitary shame. I saw it low
Among the masses and the muddy flow
Of wrangling hates and meannesses, that crept
From crime to crime and gorged the flesh and slept,
And woke to strive and gorge again and sin—
There stood the Cross, and He to all akin,
However sunk and fouled in moral mire
His brothers—there rose up the blood-red spire,
The fountainhead of life and every good,
The strength of man, the dew of maidenhood,
Unseen, unhonoured and unsought, unknown,
But still the central fact unoverthrown

And everlasting. By the crookèd gait,
By him who dwelleth in the street called Straight
And steps right onward to the duty nigh,
Betwixt the heaving bosom and the sigh
And dying men and dead, within the feast,
Above the science butcher an l the beast
Mangled and murdered for a passing play,
While angels weep and fiends hold holiday,
I saw the vision of Divine distress,
The Cross of Christ, the dread great Loveliness
For ever crucified, for ever sweet,
White hands of blessing rent and riven white feet ;
I found in every home the bitter cry,
In every heart a hidden Calvary.

MY STAFF.

“Thy Rod and Thy Staff, they comfort me.”

I begged the Master for a staff,
To stay a pilgrim poor
And scatter perils like the chaff
Upon the threshing-floor ;
Whereon I might securely lean
And walk the narrow way,
Unsoiled in circuits all unclean
Where vice keeps holiday ;
A strong assurance for endurance
In burdens on me laid,
A constant token of unbroken
Communion and His aid.
I asked not for a sceptre's gold,
The bauble of a king,
But something sweetened by His hold
Where safely I could cling ;
That would not fail in utmost need
At the first angry gust,
And snapping like a bruised reed
Betray my settled trust ;

That wore no traces of the graces
From dying art or earth,
Nor was a witness to unfitness
Foredoomed at very birth.

The Master listened to my cry,
And freely gave the staff
That stayed me in extremity,
And scattered fears like chaff ;
It was not what I had desired
Though better than I sought,
Yet past the summits I aspired
To reach my footsteps brought ;
Because its fashion was the Passion
Whereby He also trod,
The blessed sifting and uplifting
Of suffering and the Rod.

And thus the sorrow on me bound
In sickness and through loss,
By faith a comforter was found—
I leaned upon my cross ;
The prop, which I with idle quest
Pursued to help me stand
And yield the refuge and the rest,
Itself was in my hand ;
And now for ever each endeavour
Is beautiful and free,
I bear no straining load or paining—
The cross, it carries me.

OVER THE RED LEAVES.

In the sad season whose torches had kindled the wood-
lands and shades
Rolling their splendour through porches of quiet and
dim colonnades,
Under the breast of the pigeon and over the red leaves
of fire
Came to me like a religion the light of a holy desire,

Came in the sunset and glamour of colour and ravishing
balm
When all the world and its clamour were lost in an
infinite calm ;
Pulse of a passionate craving for something above and
yet nigh
Bred between resting and slaving, born between love
and the sigh,
Marked by the sweep of the swallow dividing the air for
its food,
Felt in the hush of the hollow and breathed in a
maidenly mood.
Ever one beautiful yearning for what I still longed to
achieve
Taught not by books and the learning of wisdom that
did but deceive,
Quest for a virginal era of peace where no trumpet was
blown,
Chase of a hopeless chimera and graces unheard and
unknown—
Ever that impulse had haunted my seeking by night and
by day
Stemmed not by mockers who taunted me, starved not
by death or decay,
Leading me on with a vision that yet I interpreted not
Right in the teeth of derision and enmity and hatred
and plot,
Full of unspeakable sorrow and big with unquenchable
joy
Bridging to-day and to-morrow and time as if only a
toy ;
Strong as necessity calling me, through the vain babble
of earth
Surging in billows, and falling as lightly as dew upon
dearth ;
Calm with an iron compulsion that drew me from
baubles of gain
Back by a bitter revulsion to penance and exquisite pain,
Forward like destiny lifting me over impassable bars
Idly erected and rifting the fogs and unveiling the stars ;

Yet it was gentle and lowly, and softer than infancy sleep,
Breathing an atmosphere holy and rounded by silences
 deep,
Stealing like snowflakes that stilly descend from its
 winterly womb,
Out of All-Space when the shrilly fierce blasts are at
 rest in their tomb.
Thirsting, unsatisfied hunger that raised me to dizzy
 ascents,
Thought re-creating me younger than children, divine
 discontents,
Weariness, doubtings importunate, touched with a
 beautiful fear,
Moments of error unfortunate, smiles blotted out with
 a tear,
Terrible dumbness and flashes of speech, the disconsolate
 voice
Mourning above its gray ashes and mocked by the
 crimes that rejoice,
Sudden recoils from the awful great plunge into deeps
 of the dark,
Trifling with treasures unlawful and ladders of song
 with the lark,
Emptiness aching and lonely, the populous roar of the
 mart,
Failure when failure was only the tenant that stifled the
 heart ;
These were the feelings and fancies that lashed me with
 pitiless thong
Over my ruined romances by profitless marchings along,
Through the great pillars of broken white temples that
 scaled the blue sky
Rich with a promise unspoken and poets' unsyllabled
 cry,
Whither I knew not by windings of desert and mountain
 and moor
Tricked by the turns and the findings that never yet
 opened one door ;
Seeking I knew not what haven in regions unguessed
 and unmapt,



Though on my heart was engraven a hope with which
earth seemed enwrapt,
Through all the dead and the living and through all the
ominous air
Sapping the whole with misgiving and counsels of
gloom and despair.
Thus did I suffer and travel the worlds of the wandering
thought
Helpless, and could not unravel the riddle the centuries
wrought,
Till in the autumn and setting of suns that had guided
me wrong,
Came with a kindly forgetting of each old enchantment
and song
Under the breast of the pigeon and over the red leaves
of fire—
Came to me like a religion the light of a holy desire,
Out of All-Time into vision and glory that suddenly
brake
Sweet with a solemn decision and bade my dark bosom
awake.
Not in vain pomps that bedizen the fool for his soul and
its loss
Clear on the golden horizon was painted in scarlet a
Cross,
Written in blood and the letters put forth at an infinite
grief
Paid for the loosing of fetters demanding that awful
relief.
Then like a mist of black draping my doubts in a
moment were gone,
Truth in its masterful shaping before me no mystery shone
Beaconing home, and my error which sent me in search
of the Crown
Dwindled away with the terror that long held its
prisoner down.
Now in each horrible stigma and study of passion and
pain
All undeserved the enigma and trouble of life became
plain,

Now I beheld as in lightning and blazoned with beautiful tears
Broadening for ever and brightening the secret of sorrowing years.
Not *to* the Cross is the journey of pilgrims who seek for the Crown
Ready to strive in the tourney with evil and win them renown ;
Nay, but the Cross is the starting of faith when it steps to the fight,
Bucklered and brave at the parting of ways in the shadow or light
Upward or down, and the mortal who fain would be victor and son,
Enters alone by the portal which oped for the Crucified One,
Hanging himself and his burden of sin with which sorely he ails
Only to find the fair guerdon at last on the jewelling nails.



SECTION IV.

Grammar of Grace.

GRAMMAR OF GRACE.

Lord, I am but a little child,
And have not learned the spelling
Which only leaves us good and mild,
And curbs the proud rebelling;
Though in the Grammar of Thy Grace,
The pupils always see God's face,
And need no harsh compelling.
For ages past the rod was broken
With Thy dear bleeding heart,
Wherein all have a part;
While thence the ransomed earth is soaked,
And fountains living start.

But still I study in Thy school,
I pick out here a letter
And there another, as a tool
To shape me wise and better;
For not a lesson is as hard
As my own will against Thee barr'd,
Which hugs each naughty fetter.
But at the service that is freedom
I rudely pout and pine,
And cross the danger line
To seek forbidden fruits of Edom,
Instead of tasks Divine.

There is not very much to learn,
A line or two, a copy
For which we all at seasons yearn
When tired of pleasure's poppy;
That we may trace Thy footsteps hid
By shame and shadows bright, amid

The rabble rude and shoppy.
And if I look at Thee but blindly,
Yet Thou dost not forget ;
And though my sins beset,
Thy hands beset me closer, kindly,
And teach the alphabet.

O let me try upon my knees
To master what is simple,
Read with the murmur of the bees
And in a baby's dimple ;
That tiny word of blessed trust,
Which raiseth worlds that else were dust,
And ties the maiden's wimple.
Till I can build at last a sentence
In parts that fitly twine,
And prove its meaning mine—
The riches of a free repentance,
And human love Divine.

MY CROWN.

I begged the Master for a crown
Such as the chosen wear,
Who with the thunder of renown
A nation's honour bear ;
Who in the light of noble deeds
Work on with faithful friends,
And armoured all in golden creeds,
To their appointed ends ;
Who in the beauty born of duty
Stand steadfast at the helm,
And toiling tarry not and carry
The greatness of a realm.

I thought I had an equal hand
Of their imperial kind,
To dare the utmost and command,
To loosen or to bind ;

I thought I had a conquering will,
Above mere place and pelf,
To find my good in others' ill,
And rule no less myself ;
I thought my splendid hope was blended
With purpose for the poor,
And larger vision's clear decisions,
Would open wide their door.
But then the Master heard my voice,
In all the eager pride,
Which deemed it made a kingly choice,
To labour at His side ;
He granted me my prayer at length,
Not just as I besought,
And added with the gift a strength,
To do what He inwrought ;
He for my payment took His raiment
Of earthly scoffs and scorns,
To clothe my bareness with that fairness,
And His own crown of thorns.
At first it seemed a crushing load
Which never let me rest,
A ceaseless fretting and a goad,
Whose iron pierced my breast ;
But in the grinding of the grief
I found the saving balm,
The very pain was its relief,
The scourge the victor's palm ;
And thus the burden grew the guerdon
Which gave the needed power,
While my torn bosom seemed to blossom,
And every thorn a flower.

THE WALK OF FAITH.

The way seemed dark and lonely and the clouds a
funeral wreath,
But as I went it only spread my footsteps flowers
beneath ;

The stocks with threatening gesture now uplifted me on
thrones,
The shades grew shining vesture and the blocks were
stepping stones;
The giants and the terrors dwindled to a harmless
wraith,
And all my fears were errors—for *I walked alone by faith.*

I looked below, it darkened, and a horror filled my
breast,
I looked above and harkened and sweet tidings brought
me rest;
I looked behind, the lion strode with progress grim as
fate's,
I looked before and Sion flashed on me its pearly
gates;
I looked within for leading and a voice of treason
talked,
I looked without unheeding—for *by faith alone I walked.*

The way was deep and narrow, bitter thorns about
were spread,
Their teeth that were a harrow pierced my naked hands
and head;
But yet the wounds were pleasant with a blessing of
their own,
Because the One was present who as saving balm was
sown;
In beauty burst the thistles just as spirits from their
spathe,
And blossoms sprang from bristles—for *I walked alone
by faith.*

O when in wrath and thunder clove the ground with
earthquake shock,
And failed my feet, yet under all I felt the Eternal
Rock;
The awful void seemed paven and the bars were helping
hands,
The storm was quite a haven blowing me to heavenly
lands;

And in the knell of danger I heard but the Bridegroom's
tone,
While sin was still a stranger—for I walked by faith alone.

EMPTIED.

Breathing peace and joy the Master,
Came unto me in the night
Of my grieving and disaster,
Whispering "*Let there be light!*"
So the sorrow and its curtain,
Which eclipsed the noon of day,
With its clouds and rays uncertain,
Rolled for evermore away;
For He took on Him my trouble
Till it brightened into bliss,
While He made my gladness double
With a sacramental kiss.

Then He murmured "Not by merit
Of the toils and duties done,
Canst thou hope now to inherit
Pardon and with Me be one;
Not by strife upon high stages
Trodden and great lessons learned,
Falls the blessing for thy wages,
As a right by labour earned;
Thou must be an emptied vessel,
Cleansed of all the self and sin,
And the lusts that with thee wrestle,
Ere I make My home within."

Therefore I arose in quickness,
Eager to be purged of each
Vanity and fretful sickness,
Woe to life within its reach;
And the passions like a canker
Gnawing at my secret breast,
Which forbade my heart to anchor
On the only Rock of Rest,
I assailed with prayer and sentence
Written in the Holy Book,

And with vigil and repentance
Which of strength Divine partook.

Ugly appetites that festered,
Down below and left a scar,
In this grim retreat sequestered,
Fled like baffled fiends afar ;
Serpentine and evil errors
Coiled about my very soul,
Strangling with their tricks and terrors
All that malice could control,
Found no more in me the portion
Which they once had pastured on,
In their time of dark distortion,
And before the truth were gone.

Thus by grace I cleansed the vessel
Surely for the Master's use,
Pure from lusts that strove to nestle
Under some devout excuse ;
Purged it with His hyssop sweetly
From the follies that would cling,
Formed the whole at last completely
To a palace for the King ;
Swept it throughly of the tarnished
Glory which had left it lone,
Till it shone forth fair and garnished,
Not unworthy of His throne.

Then the Lord who smelled a savour
Fresher than a maiden's thought,
Low descended in His favour
On the dwelling I had wrought ;
And He filled me with His fulness
Beautiful and strong and free,
And discrowned the old gray dulness
With a splendour good to see ;
And His fragrance glad and glowing
Cannot in my breast be bound,
But with blessed overflowing
Scatters light and love around.



STRIPT.

Once the Master dear came to me,
When I really knew Him not,
Though His presence all went through me,
While it strangely stirred my lot ;
And I listened to Him blindly
With a dull astonished ear,
As He whispered to me kindly
Words most wonderful to hear ;
Yet I hearkened to His message
And the music of His voice,
For my conscience felt a presage
Of a new and nobler choice.

Then He spoke, " Take off the clothing
Which impedes thy heavenward race,
And remember that betrothing
Which was promise of My grace ;
For thou canst not run in fervent
Zeal one step upon the road
Thus encumbered, as my servant,
With an idle heavy load ;
And I may not help thy struggles,
For the victory and right,
When the world of falsehood juggles
With the leadings of the Light."

So I eased me of the raiment
Which I gathered on my course,
And demanded no re-payment
In my penitent remorse ;
And the pride that made me stumble
With its many-coloured dress,
I renounced for garments humble
Meet for my unworthiness ;
And the vulgar earthly wrappings
Which retarded me so long,
I laid low with gaudy trappings,
And took up a sacred song.

And the vanity that clogged me
In the steep and stony track,
While its evil shadows dogged me,
All I cast behind my back ;
And the scarlet tire of pleasure
Which for years had dragged me down,
With the tinsel I deemed treasure
And the roses' fading crown,
I put off and raised my carol
Higher yet to Him who led,
While I thought of His apparel
And the thorns about His head.

I discarded every vesture
That entangled me and stayed
Under bondage, or by gesture
False on doubtful paths delayed ;
Though I did my service dumbly,
And in darkness followed yet,
And my hands rejected numbly
All the robes that still beset ;
Till I left no rag remaining
Or pretension to atone,
And stood stript and uncomplaining
In my nakedness alone.

Then the Master came in blessing,
And His Spirit moved with might,
And His touch that fell caressing
Now arrayed me all in light ;
For He garmented my nothing
With His own exceeding Grace,
And I carried as my clothing
The reflection of His Face ;
For I found the road of duty
Kept me walking at His side,
And when sheltered by His beauty
I was dressed and satisfied.



COR DULCE MEUM.

I yearned for friendship more than man
Had ever yearned before,
Since first this beating heart began
To wonder and adore—
Since like a bird it tried to flutter,
Its wings unfledged, and fain would utter
The hope it hardly dared to mutter,
The love it would implore ;
And like an open flower my breast
Which sought a clearer sight,
Turned in its eager onward quest
To every ray of light.

Mine was a hunger in the frame,
And cutting as a knife,
That with the fretting of its flame
Consumed my inmost life ;
I cared not for the earthly laurels
Which were to me but bells and corals,
I strove not in my fellows' quarrels
For any vulgar strife ;
I thirsted for no common friend
Who could not satisfy,
I craved no solace with an end
Short of eternity.

I found a man of lofty mind,
Who served his country well,
And left the sordid baits behind,
At which the weaker fell ;
To him I gave—and did not falter—
Myself as on a sacred altar,
For O I would not lightly palter
With love's pure golden spell ;
But while it drew me upward still,
As he in strength arose
And shaped me with his iron will,
I did not gain repose.

I won a maid of magic form
Who blossomed glad and good,
Unmoved by ill of lust or storm
In whitest womanhood ;
To her from darkness and dejection
I offered up a whole affection,
And waited for that resurrection,
Unknown but understood ;
Yet though she was a spotless thing,
I reaped no perfect rest
Whereto I might for ever cling—
Even on her snowy breast.

I had a child of every charm,
Like wedded light and air,
Who leant upon my sheltering arm
While growing still more fair ;
In him I thought at last was ended,
The search by which I still contended
For peace, and I had now ascended
Past all my long despair ;
But, ah, he sickened in one day
Within my very clasp,
And in his beauty passed away
Beyond my wistful grasp.

But then the doors of Heaven rolled back
From each fond useless tryst,
Revealing on my erring track
The treasures wrongly priced ;
But behind man and woman sainted,
And child with glory not untainted,
The joy for which my soul had fainted,
My sweetest heart, the Christ !
The earthly answers to my call
Seemed shadows poor and dim,
And marriage, fatherhood and all,
Were only steps to Him.

BROKEN. (I C. 11, 24 and J. 12, 3).

Christ of His holy splendour,
Perfect and with no flaw,
Gave a supreme surrender,
Bowling to earthly law ;
Yielded His flesh as token
True of a boundless grace,
Verily to be broken
Once within death's embrace ;
Ever for all who tarry
Neither for lure nor loss,
Fain in His steps to carry
Still the upraising cross.

Thus with the blessed ointment's
Savour the earth was filled,
Darkness and disappointments
All at His message thrilled ;
Over the peoples vagrant
Passed that transforming air,
Till every life made fragrant
Grew with its beauty fair ;
Till, though with love not spoken,
Master of fear and doubt,
Each stubborn heart was broken,
Pouring its sweetness out.

— — — — —
DAILY BREAD.

Dear Lord, I bless the token
Sealed with that solemn price,
I hail Thy body broken
In the one sacrifice ;
For me in nameless anguish
Thy precious blood was shed,
And for Thy food I languish—
Be Thou my daily bread.

VIA CRUCIS, VIA LUCIS.

Oft I heard companions say,
Pretty is the primrose-way,
 For it leads by laughing waters
 Through the pastures glad and green,
 Where the dark eyed siren daughters
 In their witcheries are seen ;
And I trod the flowery meadows
In the dappled shine and shadows,
 But they quickly all turned grey ;
 Via crucis
 Via lucis,
And there is no other way.

Oft I saw how pleasures goad
Myriads on the downward road,
 Beautiful and broad and pleasant
 As if it would ever last,
 With the promise of the present
 And the sweetness of the past ;
I essayed to live the story
Full of fantasies and glory,
 But it changed to penal wrath ;
 Via crucis
 Via lucis,
And there is no other path.

Oft I meet the festive throng,
Luring me with dance and song,
 When the heat of noontide scorches
 And the burden galls my back,
 To the cool and sheltered porches,
 On the many-fountained track ;
And at times I burst the border,
Tasting fruits of fair disorder,
 But they pass to bitter lack ;
 Via crucis
 Via lucis,
And there is no other track.

Oft I feel a secret sin
Opening honeyed depths within ;
 Urging me to soft recesses
 On that old and easy course,
 Where the warm and fond caresses
 Leave but ashes of remorse ;
I have drunk the tempting chalice,
But to find the dregs of malice
 And the sorrow born of play ;
 Via crucis
 Via lucis,
And there is no other way.

SON OF GOD—SON OF MAN.

What words shall I to Thee address
 Who kiss Thy mercy's rod,
Thou awful and sweet Loveliness,
 Christ Jesus, Son of God ?
Mine eyes I cannot lift to Thee,
 They blinded are with sin,
Until Thou bid'st the darkness flee
 And grantest light within.
I may but smite upon my breast,
 This evil breast of mine,
That seeks and never finds the rest
 Which makes man's heart Divine.
I feel Thy holy presence near
 In silence and in flame,
Betwixt the trouble and the tear,
 The shadow and the shame.
A solemn wonder fills my soul
 From which I vainly fly,
And round me like the ocean roll
 Thy waves, eternity.
At last, my Saviour, Thou hast come,
 In Thy calm cleansing fire,
Though I have stubborn thoughts and some
 Are mingled with the mire.

But Thou wast likewise man, and all
I suffer and disown,
The temptings but without the fall,
To Thee are not unknown.

And Thou didst choose a lowly lot,
Who hadst Thy diadem
Of many suns and stars forgot,
The Babe of Bethlehem.

For Thou wast born to every ill
And ache and cruel death,
And from Thee flows in mercy still
Like heaven Thy human breath.

A Man of Sorrows from the first
Thou hadst the scourging blame,
And nought could give Thy dreadful thirst
The love for which it came.

Into a world of woe and dearth,
Welfare for us to win,
Accursèd Thou didst enter earth,
And sinless wast made sin.

And thus Thou knowest my distress
Who hast our weakness worn,
When life was all one wilderness
And every thought a thorn.

The sufferings under which I sink
Thy portion were and more,
The bitter cup that I must drink
Thou drankest it before.

Yes, Thou didst walk with healing hand
And break the sceptred death,
About that bright and blessed land
Where sleeps Thy Nazareth.

The will not waked by priestly art
Bent to Thy sovereign power,
And many a cold and withered heart
Burst into happy flower.

Oh, Thou didst look with human eyes
Into these eyes of tears,
And as a Sun of glory rise
Upon our world of fears.

For earthly lamps that could but cheat
Thou broughtest heavenly oil,
Bearing the burden and the heat
Of all our grinding toil.

Thou gavest to the dying health,
That hushed the fever strife,
And to the leper soul the wealth
Of Thy most wondrous Life.

And none besought Thy help in vain,
And none besought too much,
For every grief and every pain
Fled at Thy quickening touch.

Thy word was freedom to the slave,
And calmed the tempest song,
The buried heard and from his grave
Upstarted free and strong.

And yet Thou art the very same,
Though not to mortal sight,
Yet is there music in Thy name,
Thy shadow yet is light.

And Thou wilt take this little heart
To which my frailties cling,
And purge it through and set apart
A palace for the King.

I see Thy justice like the night,
I see Thy conquering love,
Which when I turn in hopeless flight
Spreads its blue heaven above.

And so I stay my trembling feet
On that most holy place,
Where truth and boundless mercy meet,
Within God's own embrace.

I know my strongest faith is weak,
My deepest love is dead ;
I dare not look, I cannot speak,
I only bow the head.

And yet I see, I have no choice
Who in Thy vision share,
While all my spirit finds a voice
And rushes forth in prayer.

I come as of Thy fellow-men,
'Tis but a little way,
One step outside of self, and then
That bright and endless day.

I bring no gifts, no righteous plea
That might Thy pity move,
I simply cast me on the sea
Of shoreless unmapped Love.

Above me opes another sky,
Beneath another land,
And in Thy dread Divinity
I touch a human hand.

Because Thou art so very high,
And I so very small,
I dare to bring myself so nigh,
My sorrow, sin, and all.

I only find (as now I come),
Refuge from Thee in Thee,
For Thou my Saviour art the Home
I sought and could not see.

In Thee I trust and nothing less,
A sinner as I can,
Thou sweet and awful loveliness,
Christ Jesus, Son of Man.

HIS POEM ARE WE.

Eph. ii. 10.

'Tis written in the Book which cannot lie,
And will our beacon be,
While lesser lights of earth must droop and die—
"Poem of God are we ;"

Made to express the greatness of the plan,
The image sure of Him,
Divinity, that hath a home in man,
However it be dim ;
Meant for a witness to the truth, that yet
Is the long ages' cry,
And our God's being, who in hearts hath set
His own eternity.

Am I "His poem," reflex of the will,
All-gentle and all-just ?
And do my wishes His re-echo still,
In simple child-like trust ?
Ah ! do my hands that often fret and strain,
With His grand working rhyme,
And evermore beat out (if even through pain),
The old sweet heavenly chime ?
And do my wayward steps delight to be
One, up the Calvary slope,
With His who richly there has wrought for me
A future and a hope ?

God is the Poet, and He works in us
To walk His glorious ways,
To think and do His righteousness, and thus
Bring in the better days ;
He builds us up high in the eternal scheme,
Word joined to living word,
Each in his place part of the song supreme,
By the pure spirit heard ;
Verse matched with verse, in loving order laid
To shape a holy shrine—
Precept on jewelled precept strongly stayed,
Line upon golden line.

Oh, daily would He polish me, and bright
And brighter make my track,
Who gives a lustre in the darkest night,
To lead his wanderers back ;
And hourly doth He mould me to the form
Of the fair final grace,
By iron strokes of the distressful storm,
That veils a Father's face ;
Till purified by loss, my soul He draws
In a yet tenderer tie,
" His poem " breathing but His perfect laws—
Poem that cannot die.

LITANY.

God of mercy, God of might,
Dwelling in the day and night
And revealed to love as Light,
Hear us, Father, hear.

God of patience, God of power,
That in the last lonely hour
Burst upon the Cross in flower,
Help us, Saviour, help.

God of wisdom, God of Life,
In repentance quickening strife,
Though with sacrificial knife,
Holy Spirit, come.

Heavenly Father, when to Thee
Low we trembling bow the knee,
And but doubts and darkness see,
Hear us, Father, hear.

Blessèd Saviour, bid the trust,
Clinging to Thee as it must,
Live and bud in very dust,
Help us, Saviour, help.

Holy Spirit, calm and strong,
When the labouring day is long
Turning sadness into song,
Holy Spirit, come.

God of ages, God of all,
Present at the feeblest call,
To whom nothing weak is small,
Hear us, Father, hear.

God of gladness, God of hope,
When we climb the cloudy slope,
And great doors of danger ope,
Help us, Saviour, help.

God of promise, God of grace,
Though the glory veil Thy face,
And our hearts have little space,
Holy Spirit, come.

Heavenly Father, who wilt heed
Wounded bird and bruised reed,
And dost us Thy children need,
Hear us, Father, hear.

Blessed Saviour, when we sink
On the precipice's brink,
Fain to flee, afraid to think,
Help us, Saviour, help.

Holy Spirit, true and tried,
Daily by our lips denied,
Who hast yet all wants supplied,
Holy Spirit, come.

God of sinners, God of saints,
When the breast with sorrow faints
At the guilt which memory taints,
Hear us, Father, hear.

God of blessing, God of peace,
If our passions will not cease,
Giving to the slave release,
Help us, Saviour, help.

God of conscience, God of care,
Though ourselves we will not spare,
Sweet in penitence and prayer,
Holy Spirit, come.

Heavenly Father, we are frail,
Often fret and often fail,
But if we with sickness ail,
Hear us, Father, hear.

Blessèd Saviour, make our faith,
Lured not by a dazzling wraith,
Rest on what the Scripture saith,
Help us, Saviour, help.

Holy Spirit, if we bend
In the storm without a friend,
Thou who canst all comfort send,
Holy Spirit, come.

NULLA CRUX, O QUANTA CRUX!
ST. AUGUSTINE.

God unknown and yet so clear,
'Twixt the tear drop and the tear,
Girdled round by hope and fear,
In this cosmic ebb and flux,
One thing doth Thy servant know,
Out of passing pomp and show,
With their awful afterglow—
Nulla crux, O quanta crux!

Lord, I am an ignorant child,
Always weak and sometimes wild,
And with sinning sore defil'd,
Yet I have this wisdom won
From the flushing of the flower,
At the triumph of the tower,
In the pride of noonday power—
That the heaviest cross is none.

God unknown, and yet so dear,
Who the voiceless cry dost hear,
And wilt blunt the deadly spear,
I have learnt the greatest loss—

In the fortune fair and bright,
When vain pleasures reach their height,
And the angels take their flight—
Not to have an earthly cross.

Maker, whom I dimly serve
With a faint and flagging nerve,
Though my footsteps often swerve
Ere the tiniest task is done,
I am taught this solemn fact,
In the thunder of the act
Wrought to bridge an empire's pact—
That the hardest cross is none.

God unknown, and yet as nigh
As the sadness to the sigh,
While enthroned in splendour high,
What is gold without the dross ?
If no battle hath been fought
And the victory comes unbought
That by suffering was not sought,
What the crown without the cross ?

Sovereign, in the sweetest cup,
When with saints I fondly sup,
Yet a shadow riseth up—
In all happiness is one ;
Nowise would I wish it less,
If that Thou my portion bless,
Thou mete though in fire distress ;
For a sharper cross were none.

Master, make not day too bright,
Nor the penance brief and light,
Do not take away the night
If the tempests round me toss ;
I will not resign one pain,
I will kiss the captive chain,
And renounce the grandest gain,
For the cradling of Thy cross.

Father, Thine the glory be,
 And the burden fall on me,
 Till the shadows break and flee,
 And the rest falls after flux ;
 Leave some briars in my crop,
 Let me taste the bitter drop,
 For, if once Thy chastening stop,
 Nulla crux O quanta crux !

THE WONDER OF IT.

O God, how beautiful to live
 And on Thy bosom lie,
 A part of all, if fugitive
 And only made to die !
 O more than wonderful to be
 At all, upon this globe
 That is a shadowy glimpse of Thee,
 A glimmer of Thy robe.
 I am content to love and trust
 And look in silent praise,
 Though I be only as the dust
 Thy passing footsteps raise.

THE HARVEST.

Thou hast come to the reckoning now and the harvest ;
 Reaper *what* hast thou sown ;
 Didst thou say to the needy one, " Brother, thou
 starvest ;
 Make my plenty thine own ? "
 Hast thou stood betwixt weakness and want, with thy
 shoulder
 Bearing burdens for *them*,
 And received on thy bosom *their* wounds, waxing
 bolder,
 With storms *they* could not stem ?



Didst thou sow the good seed of a great human kindness

In the wilderness dearth,
Or bid sunshine arise on the refuge of blindness
To regenerate earth?

Wast thou hands to the helpless and feet to the falling
And release to the bound,
Or a bridge to the exile's captivity calling
As from burial ground?

Could the wail of misfortune so shadowed by malice
Ever darken thy joy,

Or the sigh of the suffering poison its chalice
And deny thee one toy?

Thou hast come to the judgment at last and the reaping;

Sinner. *what* hast thou sown?

But the thorns and the thistles of lust, for the heaping

Of a vengeance unknown?

Didst thou share thy rich fulness with him who lacked clothing

And besought it in vain,
Giving aught to the naked who wept and had nothing
But the garment of pain?

Hast thou spared of thy crusts to the sister who pleaded
In her misery rough,

When she passed by thy palace gates lone and unheeded,

Though thy dogs had enough?

Would'st thou enter the prison and loose but a fetter
If beyond thy proud class,

Or just leave by thy presence the earth around better
By a blade of green grass?

Didst thou strive in the struggle for life that is labour
Where the feeble ones fall,

With an arm for the faint and an ear for the neighbour
In the vilest of all?

Hast thou once with a finger helped one with the burden

Of his sorrow or sin,

And found sacrifice sweeter than victory's guerdon,
Or felt mourners akin ?
Thou hast come to the trial, the close and the sentence,
Sleeper, *what* hast thou sown ?
There is no place for pardon, no time for repentance,
Now the harvest is grown.

MISSIONARY HYMN.

Fight on, fight on, though fiercely rattle
The fiery arrows on the shield
By faith uplifted, for the battle
Is still the Lord's, and who will yield ?
Fight on, fight on, we dare not linger,
The trumpet notes of the command
Call us, the Cross with solemn finger
Our banner is that none withstand ;
Fight on, fight on, o'er ridge and hollow
Of foaming wave and furrowed shore,
God fights with us, and we must follow
When Christ has conquered all before.
Work on, work on, but not for wages
On burning plains and fields of frost,
If wildly round the tempest rages
And often all but Christ is lost ;
Work on, work on, the day is flying,
And scanty time at most we give,
For some are dead and some are dying,
But all who hear the message live ;
Work on, work on, for night is nearer,
With patient toil and holy plan,
God works with us, and what is dearer
To brothers than their brother man ?
Trust on, trust on, for faith is living
And from the heavenly fountains drawn,
And all our doubt and dark misgiving
Are but the heralds of the dawn ;
Trust on, trust on, the Word is certain
That will the distant Sinim seal,

And from far Ind the heathen curtain
Shall drop and Christ the Truth reveal ;
Trust on, trust on, though weakness hanker
For pleasant ports by which we sail,
God is our faith, we may but anchor
Upon that Rock which cannot fail.
Love on, love on, in spite of danger
And falling men and martyrs gone,
Who died to save from death the stranger,
Fill up the broken ranks, go on ;
Love on, love on, the sons and daughters
Of palmy isles shall hear our plea,
And love shall cover earth, as waters
That cover all the boundless sea ;
Love on, love on, while one to cherish
And teach the Gospel yet remains,
For God is love, and though we perish,
He still the glorious work sustains.

THE FOUNTAIN.

I had a vision of a fountain fair
Whose home was heaven, whose path the purple air ;
It clove a mountain's living heart, and fell
Soft as the snow, sweet as a silver bell,
Throughout all space and time for ever on
By laughing lea and pillared Parthenon,
And green green valley where the golden grape
Drew in the summer and took hue and shape
Mid red rose maidens white ; for ever down,
By stony steppe, and black tormented town
At evil strife where angry figures reared
Rebellious brows of hate and disappeared,
Through solitude of sullen waste and smoke
Of countless peoples that as billows broke
At the calm feet of God like weary spray,
And flashed a moment and then passed away ;
For ever on, for ever down it fell,
A thing of wonder, an ineffable

No wisdom do I bring, no lore
That were an incense sweet,
No treasures of one worthy store,
To render at Thy feet.

But yet, my Father I would come,
If not with costly price
That of its fulness yields but some,
To pay my sacrifice ;
For without Thee I err and fall,
Nor could I offer less
When unto Thee I offer all
I am and I possess ;
And here before Thee now I lay,
Though not in pompous rites,
And only as a beggar may,
My tribute of "two mites."

Father, my mortal *body* take,
A trouble long to me,
And with Thy touch its weakness *make*
A temple fit for Thee ;
Come, in the blessing that is power
To this frail dying flesh,
And in it as in Eden's bower
Thy will shall bloom afresh ;
My lips and hands and feet refine.
Although they seek Thee late,
Stamp them with the pure seal Divine
For Thee, and consecrate.

And O my Father, keep this heart
Which cannot keep its own,
That it may never more depart
From Thee, when truly known ;
Yes, take my sinful *soul*, that turns
At times to folly still,
And as Thy love within it burns
Show that alone can fill ;
No tempest then my trust will shake,
If self has wholly died,

And in Thy likeness when I wake
I shall be satisfied.

Father, I may not bring Thee more,
I cannot bring Thee less
Than what Thou didst bestow before,
To clothe my nakedness ;
And when my joys I reckon up
On this brief earthly stage,
Thou art the portion of my cup
And all my heritage ;
And if I come as beggars lone
Whom fortune rudely smites,
Or give as kings upon their throne,
I only give "two mites."

SERVUS SERVORUM.

Lord, not large is my petition,
Though it gathers in its plea
Like the fulness of the sea
All the poor of each condition ;
This is what I humbly crave,
Just to be the servants' slave,
And to carry comfort human
To the pinched and pallid woman,
Grinding out her love and life,
And the sweetness of this mortal
For the darkness of death's portal,
In the factory's iron strife,
But to swell accursed store ;
This I ask and nothing more.

Lord, I do not beg for money,
But the treasure of the toil
Which wipes out the sinful soil,
Nor for pleasure's acrid honey ;
I would be the carpet spread
For the pauper's weary tread,

And his mean and muddy scraper,
Or the lonely widow's taper
Which might give some solace meet ;
If with tears and bitter sorrow
That they cannot have a morrow,
Just to wash the beggars' feet,
Fallen outcast at the door ;
This I ask and nothing more.

Lord, I fain would raise the drudges,
In the greedy mill and mine,
Where the sullen hours they pine,
Now to be themselves the judges ;
I for spinners lost and lone
Would be just the stepping stone
From the shameful rule of shoddy,
With my crushed and bleeding body,
Till they reach the sunny ridge ;
I would choose no higher station
Than the dust of the foundation,
For some future golden bridge
Which will bear the suffering o'er ;
This I ask and nothing more.

Lord, I do not pray for living
With its gauds of rank or wealth,
But to scatter hope and health
In the royalty of giving ;
I am burning with a fire,
To redeem from prison mire
Wretches who could not be sadder,
And to be myself the ladder
Which uplifts them where they lie,
And their gaping wounds to cherish,
Though in serving them I perish,
If a hundred times I die
And damnation be my score ;
This I ask and nothing more.

THE SKY PILOT.

" Sic itur ad astra."

Fair weather pilot none is he,
But (far as mortals go),
He boldly launches out to sea,
Whatever winds may blow ;
However billows leap and fret,
They only bid him pray,
They cannot shake his course, and yet
He works his onward way ;
Round iron reefs and stormy capes,
By fierce and foaming bars,
Steadfast he steers his craft, and shapes
His voyage for the stars.

But frolic boats on idle whims
Are flitting up and down,
And heed not as it upward swims
The corpse's threatening frown ;
Deep in the gulf of ocean caves
They flicker to and fro,
Or hang on crests of curling waves
(Like butterflies), and go ;
They seem so gallant, while they graze
The flowery shoals in flight,
And dancing drop through purple haze
To pleasure and the night.

Though perils come he knows not when,
And terrors o'er him rise,
He carries home the souls of men,
A costly merchandise ;
The souls of men are passing sweet,
And thus he cannot stay,
Who lays them at the Master's feet,
For all his holiday ;
O earth is a poor fleeting jest,
And wordly joy but jars
On him who toils for other's rest,
And steereth for the stars.

By Scylla and Charybdis bent,
He pushes on his track,
As braver ships before him went
That never did come back ;
He coasts the Siren's pleasant lands,
With all their tempting store,
Nor heeds the white and waving hands
Upon the shining shore ;
And if a soul too idly sleeps,
The waters cannot whelm
The pilot at his post, who keeps
His hold upon the helm.

His compass is the faith, that burns
Clear in the deepest night,
And from each dazzling meteor turns
Up to the heavenly light ;
His chart is not in human books,
Nor marked by earthly times,
But (writ with God's own finger) looks
To fairer farther climes ;
No dying beacon guides the road,
It only mocks and mars
By tricking out his bitter load,
He steereth by the stars.

About him drift the ghastly forms
Of vessels wrecked and reft,
Dismasted by the deadly storms
And lone and helpless left ;
They wallow in the tumbling waves,
Which once they gaily trod,
And lift as out of blasted graves
Their broken arms to God ;
Tost up and down with every tide,
While evils hourly grow,
They reel and shudder, and abide
The last black plunge below.

Strange currents in this ocean run,
And unmapped foemen fall,



And in a midnight sky the sun
Hears drowning sinners call ;
The darkness with the daylight strives,
And gates of wondrous goals
Look dimly down on precious lives
Of beautiful sweet souls :
But still the pilot homeward leads
His freight, through noble scars,
With upward gaze as one who reads
God's story in the stars.

The lightning flashes, rocks their fangs
Unfold to pierce his bark,
Above his head the tempest hangs,
A horror dense and dark ;
The thunder rolls, and dreadful sounds
The surge beneath him sends,
And breakers grim as hungry hounds
Pursue him to the end ;
He wavers not, his heart is true,
And points from passion short
To the far opening rift of blue,
And presses on to port.

“COMPLETE IN HIM.”

One left us for he was but lent
A little while, and might not stay ;
The Master called him, and he went
Into eternal day.

One lies not in his native dust,
But under ocean deep and dim ;
And we must hush our hearts, and trust
The Lord had need of him.

Another now is gone, this time
To life, along the Master's track ;
But going caught the heavenly chime
And gave its music back.



And yet she is not gone, but still
 Holds tight the bond she ever bore,
 And shares the place she used to fill
 With one who makes it more.

She brought a brother back like light
 To those who loved and lost so long,
 And changed the sorrow of our night
 Into a marriage song.

And last is Christ, though not the least,
 To turn earth's water into wine—
 To make life all one wedding feast ;
 And so we still are nine.

CREDO.

Fenced by my little study walls I daily toil and spin,
 And hear from far like trumpet calls the struggle and
 the sin,
 The joy and sorrow of the morrow from which my
 threads of life I borrow,
 And death that is akin.
 While, by my faith, of mingled glooms and glories do I
 raise
 New towers with marble steps and rooms of builded
 prayer and praise ;
 Grand images of palaces, and graces beyond Guido
 With all his fairest fantasies, start from a simple *credo*.
 The thought that wedded is to will,
 For ever making much with its creative touch,
 Brings worlds of being into seeing
 And ransomed out of wrong and ill.
 I formed my heaven, I formed my hell,
 And both have lightly trod,
 And in its mighty crucible
 shaped myself and God.

From my citadel I see the battle rage
 And, and as a sentinel stand on a higher stage ;

The world's great story and the glory to earth's most
distant promontory,
Seem all my heritage.
I make, I mar whate'er is good—the realms that proudly
rise,
The miracle of womanhood, the purple in the skies ;
The green water, the gossamer, the sword blade from
Toledo,
The web of the philosopher, spring radiant from my
credo.
The tossing wave, the troubled wind,
The passion and the pain so often sweet and vain,
The soul of sadness hid in gladness,
I freely loose, I freely bind.
I wrought the hell, I wrought the heaven,
And ready at my nod
Compelled by faith's creative leaven,
Emerges man or God.

THE GOD NURSE.

He laid me on my mother's breast—the likeliest to His
Love,
And feathered all my little nest from His own Peace
above.
He taught me at my mother's knee the holy things and
good,
To make me beautiful and free He steadfast round me
stood.
He took me from my mother's side, and through this
desert land
Led by the gracious living tide with gentlest Father
hand.
He held me in His tender arms, if rougher grew the
road,
And shielded me from mortal harms or shared the
heavy load.
He cleansed me from the shameful sin, He tempered
every fear
To every weakness, just to win one loyal smile or tear.

He carried all my cares and grief and with my sickness
ailed,

He found His rest in my relief and at no sorrow failed.
By my affliction He was torn and felt the fatal dart,
The daily need or tiny thorn stabbed first His faithful
Heart.

For He was mingled with my woes and measured by
my chain,

My enemies were too His foes and His the bitter pain.
Whatever blast of want has blown or shadow fallen on
life,

He made its every pulse His own and blunted the keen
knife.

For me He bore the iron breath of stormy wind and
wave,

He died for me the cruel death and slept within my
grave.

But what have I repaid in turn for this most constant
Love,

I who so long refused to learn one lesson from above?
He wept with me when sadness came who taught the
nobler choice,

And as I rose from trial's flame with me He did rejoice.
But for His wise and watchful heed what service have
I wrought,

In all my grovelling selfish greed, yet hourly saved and
sought?

Ah, though He washes yet my feet and shelters me from
ill,

I weave Him but a winding-sheet and crucify Him still.

DRAW IT UP.

The ocean of life is around thee, my brother,
But yet thou abidest in need

And dost give to salvation no heed;

Though the wealth is beside thee, there is not another;

Draw it up, draw it up,

Bring thy heart as a cup!



Thou art dying of thirst, when the heavenly water
Bubbles up at thy ignorant feet
And the seeking and solace might meet ;
Why not drink of the fountain, that flows not in
slaughter ?
Draw it up, draw it up,
Bring thy love as a cup !

Thou art pining in plenty, a toiler for nothing,
But seest not light though at hand,
In the port of a neighbourly land,
And the food that is better than riches or clothing ;
Draw it up, draw it up,
Bring thy faith as a cup !

The ocean of life is around thee, poor strayer,
And thou art a wanderer still
Who hast chosen the poison and ill,
When thy lacking calls loudly for penitent prayer ;
Draw it up, draw it up,
Bring thy life as a cup !

AFTERMATH.

Sunshine and shadow have played on the field,
Drought and the falling of dew
Blessed it and broke and made it anew ;—

What is thy yield ?

Pain with its arrow and grief with its harrow
Troubled it turning each part,
Rooted up bristles of obstinate thistles
Trying the depths of its heart ;
Laid very low all the pride of the heap,
Letting in beams of the morn ;
What has the Master, who looks not for thorn,
Left Him to reap ?

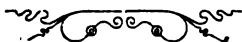
Comforts have curtained thee round with their glow
Sheltered from storm and the blight,
Raised thy poor weakness and led it to light ;—
What didst thou sow ?

Ploughing has humbled the clods that it crumbled
Surely with searching of care,
Sorrow with riving has killed the surviving
Weeds that escaped from the share ;
Where is the glory of fruits, that should leap
Ripe from the bosom of earth ?
What shall the Master, who seeks not for dearth,
Find Him to reap ?

Mercy was thine and by merit not won
Guiding thy steps through the year,
Lavish with plenty that shielded from fear ;—
What hast thou done ?

O when thou carvest good cheer from the harvest
Piling up gold in the sheaves,
Bountiful measure for thee and thy pleasure—
Whose are the pitiful leaves ?
Why dost thou offer the blemished and cheap,
Refuse that man would but spurn ?
What can the Master, who asks some return,
Reckon to reap ?

Heaven has open its windows and rained
Blessings on thee and thy store,
Riches of meetness and beauty and more ;—
What hast thou gained ?
Think of the chances that bright with their glances
Summoned thee sweetly to toil,
Mystical meanings and wonderful gleanings
Hid in the promising soil ;
Full was thy fortune and never at neap,
Bringing thee honour and all ;
What for the Master, who comes with His call,
Lingers to reap ?



SECTION V.

Matin Bells.

MATIN BELLS.

Matin bells, sweet matin bells,
With their early daily song
Poured as out of sacred wells
And in rhythmic swoons and swells,
Ding, ding, dong !
Softly falling, gravely calling
Souls to penitence and praise ;
As if flying angels crying
Did to God Himself upraise
Words like flowers, dropt in showers
On a shadowed world of wrong—
Ding, ding, dong !

Oft betwixt the will and deed,
As I dally in the throng
With a thought of sinful seed,
They recall the golden creed—
Ding, ding, dong !
Loudly pealing and revealing
To my love the better way,
And from chidden fruits forbidden,
Rousing me to watch and pray ;
Till bad savours lose their favours,
And no journey can seem long—
Ding, ding, dong !

When beneath my load I sink
Or the scourge with cruel thong,
As I totter on the brink
Of despair, they fetch me drink—
Ding, ding, dong !

Telling lowly truths and holy
To uplift me as I bend,
Till the burden is the guerdon
Which supports me to the end ;
They are nigher me and higher,
Than the earth's gay pleasure gong—
Ding, ding, dong !

Matin bells, dear matin bells,
With their early daily song,
Leading me where duty dwells
And delight has holy spells—
Ding, ding, dong !
They are keeping notes unsleeping
As I daily play my part,
With their glory's echoed story
Through the chambers of my heart ;
While to living freely giving
Balm, that makes the spirit strong—
Ding, ding, dong !

THE GRAND OLD CHURCH.

Come rally round our glorious ark,
All ye on service bent,
And shield through tempest and the dark
Our old Establishment.
For centuries of power and pride,
The pillared Church and State
Have braved together side by side
A hundred storms of fate.
And slanders all shall vainly smirch
The bulwarks Christ has wrought—
The dear old Church, the grand old Church
For which our fathers fought.
The guardian of the weak and poor
She holds our charter deeds,
And never from her open door
Turned one who carried needs.

Her voice has like a trumpet pealed
 Down ages dim and long,
 And daylight to the lost revealed
 That sorrow changed to song.
 The flames of trial did but search
 (That made a bridal bed),
 The dear old Church, the grand old Church
 For which our fathers bled.

Great dynasties have come and gone,
 And earthly systems set,
 The sun of all but brighter shone
 And shall be brighter yet.
 She is builded on the Living Rock
 And not on shifting sand,
 And shall outlive the fiery shock
 When melts the solid land.
 Lies topple from their golden perch,
 Not truth that God has stayed—
 The dear old Church, the grand old Church
 For which our fathers prayed.

Then rally round our hoary shrine,
 The Priest and Sacrament,
 Whose grace is naught if not divine,
 The old Establishment.
 She guards the lamp of holy oil,
 That makes a nation live;
 With peace she blesses every toil,
 Which she alone can give.
 The blast, that laid the silver birch,
 The great oak hardly tried—
 The dear old Church, the grand old Church
 For which our fathers died.

A CHRISTOPHANY.—I.

I had a dream, a solemn dream
 That bade me hold a tryst
 Down by a dark and rolling stream,
 With the dear blessed Christ.

I saw a Hand, a piercèd Hand,
Which called me from this pleasant land
And every idle whim,
The scarlet flowers
And happy bowers,
And beckoned me to Him—
Unto a tryst, a holy tryst
With my fair Master, the sweet Christ.

It came at night, one awful night
Stabbed by the levin's dart ;
And yet a marvellous great Light,
Broke from a bleeding Heart.
I saw His eyes, His loving eyes
More soft than sun in summer skies—
More beautiful than day
With holy tears
That washed my fears,
And made me kneel and pray ;
Till in that Heart, that bleeding Heart,
I found myself, my better part.

It was no dream, no passing dream,
It was no fancied tryst ;
And life was that gray tossing stream,
Which carried me to Christ.
I saw His feet, His piercèd feet
On cutting stone, in cruel street,
Wherein He had no lot ;
For labour's pen
And striving men—
Alas, they knew him not.
Though toil and tryst, each noble tryst,
Drew virtue from the wounds of Christ.

I bent my brow, my rebel brow,
And struck this guilty breast ;
And to my lips a sudden vow
Rushed, with a sacred rest.
I heard His voice, His healing voice,



That mixed with my own settled choice ;
 And on my drooping head
 He bade me bear
 The cross of care,
 Which He had borne instead.
 And on His breast, His heavenly breast,
 I found the very thorns were rest.

And now I keep, I daily keep
 Beneath the Cross a tryst,
 And in the visions of my sleep
 I suffer still with Christ.
 I know His face, His wondrous face
 Is all my glory, all my grace,
 If life be sometimes dim ;
 And, when I ail
 Some tender nail
 Will marry me to Him.
 And so a tryst, a lover's tryst
 Is what I only ask of Christ.

A CHRISTOPHANY.—II.

Offspring of sadness, astray on the street,
 Tost as in madness with bruised brown feet,
 Cometh a ranger of alleys and slums
 Suckled on danger and starved with our crumbs ;
 Wizen'd and tattered and harshly by mire
 Spotted and spattered and flecked as with fire,
 Bearing a burden of refuse and crusts
 Left as the guerdon of drains and the dust ;
 Crushed, with no portion of pleasure or taste,
 Cast an abortion on misery's waste :—
 Who is this, Holy One ? Speak to my heart ;
 Who is this lowly thing, lost and apart ?

Sudden the shadows of time roll away,
 As from the meadows the mists that delay
 Struck by the arrows of sunlight, and woe
 Tells how it harrows the poor with its throe ;

Child he no longer appears, and the brow
Brightens and stronger his bearing is now ;
Ah, and the bitter mean load on his back,
Sends a strange glitter through ruin and wrack ;
Holy the fashion, and cruel the loss ;
Here is the Passion, for here is the Cross.
Yes I see, Holy One, under the pain
Unto this lowly lot Christ nailed again.

Food for the gallows, he slinks to his cell
Wrecked on the shallows that lead us to hell,
Hopeless, a spoiler of men, with no brand
Borne by the toiler and ruddy of hand ;
Brutal in features and gloomy in mind,
Shaped as the creatures that prey on their kind,
Sinister, scenting the blood from afar ;
Grim, unrelenting, with many a scar
Scorching the traces of anger and lust,
Pestilent places and all the unjust.
Who is this, Living One, evil and dim ?
Is there forgiving yet treasured for *him* ?

Lo, as I ponder this problem of night,
If for such yonder there yet may be light,
Somehow and somewhere, and happier lot
Ever can come where the heart is one blot ;
Into the prison, which frowns as if hope
Could not have risen or found there a scope,
Shineth a splendour but not of our skies
Making it tender and pure those dark eyes,
Turning to golden delight the sere dross
Till with its olden sad tale stands the Cross.
Yes, I see, Living One, in that vile flesh
Christ the forgiving is murdered afresh.

Tramping the pavement, a blight on the flags,
Gilded enslavement with virtue in rags,
In the surrender that loses the whole
Paid by the vender of body and soul ;
Dizened and nameless, the daughter of sin
Strolls along shameless with impudent chin,

Wanton, a scorner of honester trade,
 Now at a corner and now in the shade
 Flaunting the jewel as false as her speech,
 Greedy and cruel, athirst as a leech.
 Who is this, Blessèd One, yet in the bud,
 Basely caressèd and cheap as the mud.
 Over the tricking of powder and stains,
 Horribly sticking like leperous blains,
 Over the sneering of folly and vice
 Spread as veneering and bought at a price,
 Surges a glory and shimmers a grace
 Read not in story of earth's highest place ;
 Tenderly soften those features through paint
 Saddened, as often the eyes of a saint
 Through the wild welter of temptings that toss
 To the one shelter, revealing the Cross.
 Now I see, Blessèd One, from the black mire
 Christ has caressèd this form as with fire.

THE NEW MAGDALEN.

Christ came, as often He makes His theophany,
 Came in the street—
 Came as a Lonely One, came as the Only One,
 Naked of feet ;
 Robed but in tatterings spotted with spatterings
 Cast by the mire.
 Clouts, as in merriment shaping a cerement,
 Veiled not His fire
 Breathing sweet awfulness on the unlawfulness
 Bursting its bound,
 On the iniquity and the obliquity
 Surging around ;
 Till all the blindnesses seeking for kindnesses
 But without rest,
 All dumb maternities in dark eternities,
 Hid in His breast ;
 All the sad billowings hungry for pillowings
 Hailed in Him part,

All the wild malices drunk with hell chalices
 Brake on His heart.
Christ as a Pariah stood forth a barrier
 Meeting the foe,
Hushing the harlotry, exiled by varletry
 Outcast in woe.
Beggary, shameful dress, took an unblameful dress,
 Touched by His hand ;
Thirsting and neediness, lusting and greediness,
 Owned His command.
And the unshriven lot sprang a forgiven lot
 Fair from His light,
Born into blessedness from the caressedness
 Found in that sight.
Christ as the Holy One, Christ as the Lowly One
 Bearing His Cross,
Spake to me winning souls, sware of all sinning souls
 None should be loss.
Tears for pain's harrowings, horrors and harrowings,
 Fell a sweet flood,
Blotting out sentences barring repentances—
 Great tears of blood ;
Words for the wondering, words for the blundering
 Orphans adrift,
Staggering on so late, deaf and disconsolate—
 Words to uplift.
“ Who is this brittle reed, who is this little reed
 Down in the dust,
Withered and wearily bending and drearily
 Blown by each gust ?
Once she was dutiful, once she was beautiful,
 Bright as the morn ;
Now she goes toilingly, now she goes soilingly,
 Branded with scorn.
No one may name her more, no one can shame her more,
 Blighted in brow ;
Marked for indignity, shunned by benignity,
 Look at her now !
Victim of vanity, dead to humanity,
 Drowning in drink—



Type of the terrible refuge inerrable,
 Over the brink ;
 Under the shimmering stars and the glimmering
 Gas-litten glcom !
 Fear, though sin's sediment is no impediment
 Now to her doom ;
 Draggled and wandering, troubled and pondering
 What will be next,
 Past any miracle, hopeless, hysterical,
 Misery's text !
 Yet in her flightiness girt by Almightiness'
 Infinite care,
 Yet from obscurity meant in a purity
 Richer to share.
 Who is this little reed, who is this brittle reed
 Bending so low ?
 Who is this rumpled thing, who is this crumpled thing
 Halting and slow ?
 Tell me of sadnesses, tell me of madnesses,
 Then you can guess
 Who is this blighted one, who this unrighted one
 Dumb with distress ?
I'm not condemning her, *I'm* not condemning her,
 Others may grudge
 Least crumb of feelingness for mute appealingness ;
 Who is her judge ?
 Wicked *I* call her not, erring *I* thrall her not
 With the old bond ;
 Past the sour Pharisee, over her heresy
 Light leaps beyond.
 All I can see in her, all soon to flee in her
 Is passing night,
 Trespassing, sorrowful, quenched by the morrow full
 Of visions bright ;
 Only the meeknesses, only the weaknesses
 Bidding her stray,
 Turned into sweetnesses of my completenesses
 In the new day.
I lift a stone for her, *I* who atone for her,
I fix a brand !

I would set throne for her, if all alone for her,
 Proud by her stand.
 Love sees the beautiful mating the dutiful
 In a true tryst,
 Love sees divinity and new virginity
 Reborn in Christ.
 Love sees no sin in her, love sees begin in her
 Innocence quite,
 Love sees a glorious lot and victorious
 Loveliness white.
 Where is the Stoical spirit heroical,
 Raising her up!
 Where is the womanly hand, giving humanly
Her the love cup?
 Not mere mortality hers, but reality
 No man hath priced;
 Out of her viciousness comes all deliciousness;
She is the Christ."

THE PILGRIM.

I walk in the strength of weakness
 That clings to the Holy Rood,
 In the pride of the Master meekness
 Of the gentle Brotherhood;
 Who the awful sign have carried
 And the lamp of living oil,
 And with blood and fire were married
 To the consecrated toil;
 Who have bowed with others' burden
 And been scourged with others' rod,
 But asked for no fairer guerdon
 Than to suffer alone with God.
 I walk in the dark by vision
 From the Light that cannot lie,
 With the sword of the one decision
 That has cut each earthly tie;
 For the saints are my sweet assessors
 As I go on my pilgrim path,



In the faith of the old confessors
 Who have trodden the road of wrath ;
 And the flint, where my footstep lingers,
 Makes me feel with velvet shod,
 And the thorns are but friendly fingers
 That beckon me home to God.

I walk in the might of martyrs
 Who are near when I travail most,
 In the name of the churches' charters
 That are more than an armed host ;
 And I rest, when my heart is weary,
 On the Rock of no mortal plan,
 And I count no service dreary
 That is done for a brother man.
 And the flame is a blessed beacon,
 As the Cross on the graveyard sod,
 If a fear for a moment weaken
 My hold on the Human God.

I walk under skies of waving
 Palms, though the tempest frowns
 And the blasts of hell are raving,
 But I only see the crowns ;
 And the Holy One I follow
 I mark in the beggar's rags,
 Though His hand weighs in its hollow
 The worlds and the iron crags ;
 Not a thought may now be craven,
 If the mountains quake and nod,
 And I cannot miss my haven,
 For the Way itself is God.

JUDAS ISCARIOT.

I had a dream of marble palaces
 Bathed in blue skies, and broken images
 Of emperors and gods, discrowned, dethroned,
 And the great rule of iron and blood atoned
 By blood and iron at last and laid in dust,

With all its pomp of consecrated lust
And loves dissolved and liberties denied
By venerable vices deified.
And then I met Him, met the Master, strong
In meekness that was might, amid a throng
Of Galilæans clamouring to be led
Against the Spoiler who with spacious tread
Bestrode the earth at His unbounded will
And drained it dry, and asked another still
To torture in those convolutions vast,
And leave when sucked an empty shell at last.
Yes, grim and gaunt as famished hounds were *they*
That smelled the blood and hungered for the prey,
Snapping and snarling at His heels, and all
(Who yet came greedy to be fed at call)
At strife among themselves, in impotence
Of blind ambition for pre-eminence ;
Good stuff for soldiers, panting to be led
With large and loyal hearts, but with no head
For calculation's calm and symphonies
Of stately plots and measured strategies ;
Like bloodhounds straining in the leash, with tense
And trembling muscles and one murderous sense
Of the red tainted track they nosed and knew,
And wild to wallow in the deathly dew
With garments rolled in battle and in gore,
While fierce their eyes stared steadfast on before.
But I had brains, I nursed a patient heart
And felt within me power to hold a part
Not all unequal to the coming clash
Of awful arms, when warring worlds would crash
And better peace with fairer land and sky
Would slow emerge from earth's great agony.
He talked of kingdoms, too, and said a sword
Would be His sceptre and He looked our Lord,
From that pure brow which dominated each
To the firm footstep with its royal reach
That went straight forward to its certain end,
Nor swerved one jot nor would one tittle bend
From the appointed purpose. *He was King,*

His voice had just the right imperial ring
 With all its woman's tenderness, and spoke
 As with authority and in us woke
 Strange feelings, higher thoughts, a grander state,
 And swept us onward like the march of fate.
 But He delayed, and dallied with the fire
 His words had lit and fanned to vast desire,
 Commensurate with Israel's regal scope
 And broad humanities of blessed hope.
 Affairs were ripe, the actors ready, time
 Had struck the hour with stern impatient chime
 For venture and for victory, and yet
 He lingered when the feast seemed almost set
 And in the hand the prize, the precious meed,
 For the great heart that grasped the present need
 And beat in tune. The Roman wolf lay drowsed
 With wine and wassail, and at ease caroused
 Although in harness, careless of the wave
 That hung and gathered and might be his grave.
 The legionaries, swollen with pride and lust,
 Contemptuous, marked no murmur of the gust
 Precursor of the storm, and threw in play
 The dice that nigh had thrown a world away.
 No fear from them, the mercenary spear
 That sold its favours only when paid dear
 And (were we masters, as we might have been)
 Had fought for us. The peril waxed unseen,
 A grisly menace ; step by step it drew
 Nearer, and to a bodied blackness grew
 In sullen workshops, on the silent mount
 And desert shore, and at the shining fount
 Where maidens met and babbled ; and from marts
 Went up the troubled sigh of bruised hearts,
 Amid the wrangling of the rogues and fools.
 Yes, out of Rabbis' dim and dusty schools,
 Arose a solemn rustling to the skies
 Of yellow parchments and phylacteries,
 Borne on the breath of prayer and pious hate
 That knocked for ever at Jehovah's gate.
 And even the royal harlot's perfumed bed,

Where drugged with wanton dreams the golden head
Lay lapt in pride, found in that purple blot
Room for a hope that was one splendid spot
And made sin well nigh beautiful. The feet
Of laughing children down the sultry street,
Mimicked in sport, that did most brightly feign,
The expected hour when Israel yet should reign.
And to and fro, with lustrous oval cheek,
Intent on trade and talk the curious Greek
With news a glittering shadow came and went,
And higgled for a mite, and bowed and bent
In supple grace. From stormy cape and crag,
And Parthian wastes, flashed out the danger flag
For those who knew the tempest signs ; the air
Was thick with portents, up the starry stair
Climbed new strange beacons, and the deepening
gloom

Heavy with thunder travailed as for doom.
Lo, through the east an ominous whisper sped
From land to land, the midnight skies were red
With wrath and ruin, and a bloody blade
Aloft was brandished in the shivering shade
Above infatuate Rome ; a rumour crept
Through silken chambers, where the tyrant slept
On rose-strewn couches, boding change and strife
And fair beginnings of a larger life.
But He was silent, He delayed, though still
His words were firebrands, which He flung at will
Among us, many a bright and burning phrase,
To kindle hearts and set the world ablaze ;
Division ever was His thrilling theme,
In house and home, and in the mightier scheme
Of courts and councils, sire against the son,
And friends against their friends that were as one,
With treachery and treason every breath
And parents hounding children to the death
Or children parents. While the stars for Him
Contended up in Heaven, though earth waxed dim,
And kings went down, and dynasties were cast
Autumn leaves and stubble on the blast,

And out of chaos and the cosmic pall
His own new kingdom mounting over all.
And *we*, He said in words like thunder tones,
Should rule with Him and sit on equal thrones
And judge the nations with our sceptred hands
Beneath the bluer skies, in greener lands,
Baptised with blood that marked the era's close,
While wildernesses blossomed as the rose.
And I believed Him, I believe Him yet,
Though now in darkness that dear Sun has set
To soar again with broader brighter rays,
And usher in the true heroic days.
I thought to serve Him by one desperate deed,
And make our holy faith the conquering creed
Again, and bring again for David's shrine
The human grandeur and the grace divine,
With more than David's empire and a home
For Israel vaster than the dreams of Rome.
And so I played the traitor, I who meant
Only to force His hand, and on Him leant
And on His promise as on some tall tower,
With no misgiving of His will or power ;
I would compel Him thus to make us free,
And flash the sign to hungry Galilee,
Expectant, hot with the Messiah's name,
Like tinder quick to burst into a flame
When fell the fatal spark, a word, a look,
A gesture or a passage from the Book
That metes our marching orders. I was sure
Of His fixed purpose, and in Him secure.
I never doubted He would then draw back
Or turn a hair's breadth from the appointed track
And predetermined goal, while putting by
The investiture of all Eternity ;
I never dreamed when God Himself sent down
His benediction and a heavenly crown
In Jordan's flood and on the holy hill
Of transformation, He would yet stand still
And strike no worthy blow and give no sign
When prophecies were ripe and hours benign.

I never guessed His was no earthly reign,
And all he said was darkly used to feign
Another kingdom and another power
Within us, when the heart itself would flower,
Responding to the Spirit and hold sway
In parable with Him some distant day.
I thought the lightning now would be His sword,
And angels flock in legions round their Lord
From miracle to miracle, and none
But He (as old deliverers had done)
Would lead us forth to conquest and its palms,
With rolling thunder of re-echoed psalms,
And call down bolts from the blue firmament
As awful seals of our enfranchisement.
They thought me thief when I with patriot thrill
Preferred my country and God's righteous will
Revealed by prophets to the passing need
Of poverty's just tolls, in higher heed,
For holy wars and treasures and aims
Of statesmanship and kingdoms' broader claims,
To build foundations for divinest dues
And be the seed of royal revenues.
Myself I never served, I scorned defence
Of lofty acts and larger providence
Beyond the flight of petty minds that drudged
Their dreary mill-round, and from ruts misjudged
In their dull progress that could only creep,
My glorious visions and the imperial sweep
Which bade me store my little, though in stealth,
For our renewed and ransomed commonwealth.
No pulse of gain, no dream of traitorous greed
Moved me one moment to the daring deed
So gravely planned, and all without offence;
I thought the armies of Omnipotence,
The hierarchies of the heavens and Space
Would at his bidding in their bright embrace
With Cherubim and Seraphim in hosts,
Fall on the city and its vantage posts,
And seize the Temple and the towers and cast
The tyrant out with one consuming blast.

And then He yielded tamely, though His look
So calm and kingly and unearthly shook
His captors, cowed and grovelling to the dust
In abject terror, like a whirlwind's gust ;
While valiant Peter drew his sword to slay
And struck one blow in the old sturdy way
For vengeance and for Israel's sake, and then
A desperate front and more determined men
Had roused the people to His rescue, fired
With hate of years and by His love inspired.
But, lo, He meekly stayed the storm, and sheathed
The crimson blade of promise, as He breathed
Words like a blessing that were bitter woes
Upon the coward renegades and foes.
So they forsook Him, all—even Peter fled
And followed far, as if no blood were shed,
But then denied Him thrice. I flew on wings
Of hope and fear, with awful questionings,
To spread the news and gather friends and speed
The Galileans to their Captain's need.
But sudden panic held those fiery hearts,
Though still I urged all stratagems and arts
And past forgiveness lied to make them move ;
They asked for angels, portents, signs to prove
It was God's mission, and the destined time
For action when the least delay was crime.
And rose the barrier never to be crost,
The precious hours passed by, and all was lost ;
While that false rabble, not content to fly
And mock Messiah, now cried "*Crucify !*"
I took the silver, which I won in craft
To fill our coffers and to wing our shaft,
And threw it down though in the Holy Place
Before the priests, and cursed them to their face.
And may Jehovah keep that curse for me,
Till Christ returns and Israel yet is free ;
And may it rest on that poor dastard land
Which for its Saviour would not lift a hand,
And rot their life and poison all they do
With blight, and as a cancer eat it through.

I saw Him die, whose service was one death
For us ; I marked the torture of each breath
So bravely borne, and heard those human lips
Sob forth their love in the last dread eclipse
And care for others, and that bitter cry
Wrung from a broken heart in agony.
But, in the ghostly shadow ere it fled,
I, drawn still nearer by the light He shed
From the red Cross which was His royal throne—
A light that seemed to fall on me alone,
In my black horror—caught His tender look,
And read my pardon there as in the Book.
He knew I stole and plotted but for Him,
And every pulse beat true in every limb—
For the great cause—He knew, who came to save
As all hearts' King, and like a King forgave.
But now I cannot live apart from Christ,
And thus I go to keep a wedding-tryst
(To show Him I am faithful to the end)
With beautiful dear death, my only friend,
If in His Paradise we yet may meet,
Though I be dust beneath His blessed feet.

THE GREAT QUEST.

"Beyond those peaks of purple," some one said,
"That seem to prop the palace of the heavens
And meet and mix with them in loveliness
Of hyacinthine light, the Vision dwells
Through pillared porches opening into Life,
Where truth and beauty mingle and are one
In happiness and peace." And I believed
And journeyed on in uncompanioned haste
A solitary soul, but still possess
With purpose like a fire, and ecstasy
Of hope that stept on roses as it trod
In triumph, heedless of the toil and soil
And buffetings of chance and change. I went
Straight as an arrow from the bow and winged
With passion, forward to the one fixed goal.

No terror turned me, no dread circumstance
 Of danger stayed my feet that made the stones
 And thorns subservient to their pilgrimage ;
 Though shadows as of death encompassed me
 And threatening shapes that melted ere I passed,
 While horror of deep night at times rushed down
 Superincumbent. Ever on I moved,
 Who only sought the beautiful and best.
 But as I drew yet nearer, lo, the tops
 That looked like summits of high virgin thought,
 White roses bathed in blue and heaven, sank down
 And dwindled into insignificance
 Of common colours and most humble mien,
 Which nought but distance and my purblind gaze
 Had fashioned forms magnificent. I took
 Them almost in my stride, and scarce
 Discerned as different from the valley or plain.
 No solemn Vision greeted me, no Voice
 Brake like a living fountain from their cup
 Of quietness ; I heard the weary wind
 That wailed as it had wailed ten thousand years
 Among the rocks in their gray grim repose,
 The rugged sphinxes of the solitude ;
 I saw no sight to gladden me, with peace
 Of riddles answered and old secrets solved ;
 I caught no word of comfortableness,
 That spake of lofty hopes and dreams fulfilled
 In vast fruition of rich act and fact ;
 And still that ancient singer babbled on,
 Just to itself. I wept and wondered now,
 Where lay the Truth, the Unattainable,
 Which yet I sought and wrought to overcome
 If at the supreme sacrifice of all
 That makes life worthy, health and wealth and life.

Then as I wept and grovelled in the dust,
 Appeared a holy man with looks of love
 And light that wove a wonder round his head
 Hoary from time and measured pieties,
 With murmuring lips of praise and breast of rest,

Who lifted up my fallen frame and mind,
And said, "Believe in God and dwell with me
Apart from men, and multiply sweet prayers
And charities for suffering pilgrims here,
Rejected by the world, and pour thy heart
Out in a daily stream of constant toil
And worship." So I hearkened to his speech
That dropt like dew upon a wilderness
Upon my soul, and sojourned in his house,
And mortified my flesh with fasts and nails
Of crucifying penance, seeking what
I thirsted for with many tears and fears.
Whole nights I wrestled sore with monstrous foes,
Obscene and sudden, which against me flocked,
And brought with them all the artillery
Of evil, if they might but everthrow
The sanctity of my pure purpose. Lone
I faced them on my knees with agonies
Of supplication, meeting sword of pride
With shield of purpose, and though wounded oft
And bitterly I struggled toward some end,
Faint, yet determined still. I scattered gold
About me as I held my steadfast course
Of ministering mercies, and I lay
Myself in sackcloth on the dank hard stone,
Which struck me with inevitable arms
And bruised with frequent blows. But never came
The rending veil, the clear theophany.
I seemed as one who twisted ropes of sand,
And builded castles in the clouds of air
Or fancy; all my prayers and praises ran
To foolishness as beads upon a string,
Told in the twilight to the flickering shades
By ghostly figures; while the cares and snares
Of banished life peeped mockingly within
My haunted cell and yet more haunted heart
Still. Vainly did the chants devotional,
The sacred rites and solemn mysteries,
The service and the pageantry of cults
And venerable creeds that bowed the form



But not the spirit, hedge me round with bound
Of holy bars and bolts innumerable,
And talk to me in measures calm and soft
Antiphonies and ardent undertones.
That came not, which I sought by divers ways
Of genuflection in the very soul,
Which bent and bent not to observances
And forced oblations not my own ; I stood
Outside it all, a mere spectator, touched
But yet not taken by the almighty tide
Of worship, that with whirl and swirl profound
Caught other souls and flooded them with flame
And secret music, till they overflowed
In bright and burning love and walked with God
And lived in utter disembodiment.
I heard not, saw not, felt not aught except
One awful Silence dark unknowable.

I wandered forth once more, a haunted thing,
A sole and separate waif, and lacked not guides
Or councillors. They crawled on every hand,
Loud, confident and multitudinous,
Cheap as the dirt and common as the weeds
Beneath my feet ; they swarmed as vermin swarm
In rubbish and the horrors of decay,
Corrupt themselves, and so corrupting all
With the dire taint of their infectiousness,
Whate'er they handled. Each with remedies
To heal the heart or the distempered brain
And any ill, with much religiousness
Or wondrous new moralities not taught
By right or reason or the maddest church ;
Each *rostrum* had its *nostrum* for my case.
Again I plunged into the moil of men
And things, and drank the battle's fevered breath,
Esteeming strife as life, and held my own
Against tremendous odds, and rose and fell
And rose once more Antæus from the earth,
To smite the foeman down in dust and shame
And gather splendid spots, in armoured ease

Of resolution as on anvils wrought
Red-hot to iron perfectedness of might ;
And from the pious palimpsests of use
With all its organised hypocrisies
And glittering masks of meretriciousness,
I tore the veil and showed the naked springs
And devilries at work, the engine-room,
The reeking hell that was the human breast.
One bade me live, another bade me die,
And both with equal certitude of speech
Assured. One told me work was everything,
Rejuvenescence and the fount of joy ;
While yet another sware, that rest alone
From toil and soil could bring me happiness
And peace of soul. One knew the bliss required,
The longed-for Vision and the Victory
Lay all within the heart of man himself
For introspection and the purged desire ;
Another knew the wells were all without
In Nature communed-with and made a friend,
And conquering paths of broad humanities
In fellowship of love and labour. One
Proclaimed the sole sufficiency of trust,
Another preached pure excellence in deeds,
And both alike with boundlessness of pride
Boasted the secret of Omniscience.

But in the teaching and the preaching, thrust
Upon me by a thousand ready guides
Or leaders who to nothing led but night,
And could not lead themselves one little stage
Along the road of life, I found no rest ;
But only counsels darkened, and despair
Or shame of mind. Confusion spread around,
It crept from bosom unto bosom thwart
And threatening, and it coiled about the heart
Circumvolutions serpentine and sad
And chill. The rulers and authorities
But feigned and reigned not over any realm,
Excepting drear logomachies of dust.

For all had different ways, and yet agreed
 In insolence and infertility
 Of thought that was mock thunder without bolt
 Or the red sword of lightning; optimists
 Sang hope and peace and fair enfranchisements
 At last somehow for every creature; some
 Rejoiced and revelled in the frank blank crash
 Of universal ruin, and a doom
 In final unimaginable woe
 Fixed; some, with besoms of gay theories,
 Surmised that they could sweep an ocean back
 Or on with strophe and antistrophe,
 Of laboured line and elegant conceit,
 And make the play and spectacle their own
 With splitting hairs and measurements of straws;
 Some in the present, some in the deep womb
 Of ages dim and distant, marked the rose
 That was redeeming dawn, new chastities
 And chivalries, the modes and codes of life's
 Last efflorescence, when the rude crude days
 Had passed; some sallied forth on wild crusades
 And raked the gutters, moral scavengers,
 Who drew from ugly sores unspeakable
 The decent veil, and gloated over heaps
 Of hateful refuse and the leprosies
 That bred in brothels; some ran over still
 With babblement of many words and cures,
 And went and came in empty rivalries
 Backward and forward up and down the streets
 And market-places, hawking petty trash
 Of medicines that were mockery and grief.
 And from the pulpit rose no certain sound
 But mumblings low and mouthings of false lips,
 The postures and impostures of the boards,
 The harlotries of art and masquerade
 That halted through its helpless mummery.

So I perceived at length there was no bound,
 No Vision and no Voice of comforting
 Save in the passion of pursuit; the end

Was nothing, and the way was everything ;
And in no idle refuge ultimate
Lay Victory, but in the constant strife
And agony and clash of hand with hand
Or soul with soul. And thus I marked evolved
The plenitudes of progress and the grace
Of poesies, through gray catastrophes
That sowed the seed of fresh vitality
Betwixt the ribs of death. I saw the end
Must be for ever unapproachable,
And if an end existed all would stop
When it was reached in equilibrium
Of pale paralysis and dumb deep night
And dark stark frost. No anchorage that held,
Save for a moment when our battered ships
Were moored against some new philosophy
And gathered food to voyage farther on
Into the awful Infinite, abode
On this side of the mystery called life,
Nor was desired. For but in ceaseless flux
Of creeds and deeds and bright activities
And energies, and impulses and shifts
Of aims and claims with fresh horizons yet
Expanding, could the faculties of man
And blossomings of sweet moralities
Be brought to birth and grow to grander heights,
As purple mountains leap range beyond range
To purple skies and marry heaven and earth.
I proved the moment ethical sufficed,
And *that* was all ; to seize the effluence
Of prayer or passion, the voluptuousness
In woven arms when mouth kist mouth and breast
Met breast, and all the body pulsed with fire,
The white abandonment of ecstasy
Immersed in depths devotional. No waste
Of thought and feeling, or the aptitudes
And jealousies of educated wit,
That flashed among our delicate delights
And fell in sadness or rose up in song,
But always played about the paradise

Of men, for ever lost, for ever found,
If only in the humble flowers of earth.

Thus have I learned—by the similitudes
Of present nature and the apparent war
Betwixt all creatures and all things that live,
Which hardly hides the brotherhood below
And fellowship of aim and unity
Through sacrifice—thus have I dimly learned,
There is no true theophany but this :
The lesson by the way, the walk, the talk,
The rapture of resistance overcome,
The fight of might, the plenitudes of hope,
The revelation of the heart to heart
By loss and cross and torn tumultuousness
Of appetites that surge and urge us on,
To break like foam on iron and dreadful rocks
Of righteousness and rule immutable
By a Divinity, I know not what,
Above, around, within and everywhere
Desired, and yet most undesirable
By imperfections shrivelling at its touch.
I simply feel that, whether wrong or right
My plan and purposing, I shall go on
As now somewhither and somehow to some
Uncertain issue not finality,
Taught and untaught by trifles and the vast
Outgoings of the ages ; till I gain,
If I do gain, a seeming strength at length
To be myself and not another, nerved
For either fortune, to endure, enjoy
Whatever comes or seems to come to me
From inner founts or the environment
Of shining shapes that fluctuate and are
But shadows. And content in uncontent
Of resignation is my will and skill
Whereby to steer my storm-tost impotence
Unto the haven not of happiness,
But knowledge tempered to the passing hour,
And re-adjusted, as I step through gloom

Or glimmer of a ghostly photosphere
All undefined and undefinable.
But still I seek and seek—because I must,
And choose, as being the slave of circumstance
No less than lord—the Vision that eludes
My utmost efforts and for ever flies
Before me in new latitudes of thought
And un conjecturable fantasies
Where night is day, and no beginning is
And never bounding wall, and day is night,
The end no end, the Unattainable.

THE BOOK OF PRIVATE PRAISE.

I thank Thee, sweetest Lord, that I
Am wonderfully made,
Although Thou art so very high
And we do quickly fade ;
That I was greatly clothed by Thee
Within this fearful dress,
A Body beautiful to see—
Fair in its fallenness.

I thank Thee for these god-like Eyes
Which wander through all Space,
And entertain the land and skies
In their small dwelling-place ;
And yet behold the tiniest thing
Which has a moment's gleam,
The dust upon the insect's wing,
The dewdrop in the beam.

I thank Thee for this awful Ear
Which could not ever hark,
If Thou was not Divinely near
Interpreting the dark,
And giving silences a sound
Of fellowship, to greet
Deaf pilgrims on earth's holy ground
Which echoes back Thy feet.

I thank Thee for this wondrous Mouth,
 That takes the print of prayer,
 And carries forth from north to south
 Sweet music as Thy sayer ;
 A portal for Thy praises fit
 And filled by these alone,
 And where Thou dost delight to sit
 As on a kingly throne.

I thank Thee for this cunning Hand
 A masterpiece of skill,
 Which moulds a cherry stone or land
 Alike to its great will ;
 And wields the sword that fashions men
 To yet Diviner things,
 And conquers earth with plough and pen
 Or harps on golden strings.

I thank Thee for these willing Feet
 That bear the temple up,
 Which Thy pure presence makes so meet
 And sacred where to sup ;
 That more than with colossus stride
 Do bridge the boundless globe,
 And feel on every shore and tide
 The flashing of Thy robe.

I thank Thee for this royal Mind
 Which rises in each fall,
 And looks before and looks behind
 Serenely weighing all ;
 Which metes its purple to the mount—
 Its passion to the sky,
 And drinks for ever from the fount
 Of Thy eternity.

I thank Thee for this little Heart,
 Which needs Thy constant fire
 To keep it holy and apart
 With virginal desire ;
 Which, though so often shut in shade,
 For nothing mean was meant,

And is of every creature made
Thy favourite instrument.

I thank Thee for this iron Will,
A ray of Godhead's dower,
Which freely chooses good from ill,
And breathes almighty power ;
Which is the master of its fate,
No toy of idle wrath,
And loves to lay its sovereign state
A carpet for Thy path.

RIPENING.

My soul is ripening in the shell
Wherein it must a season dwell,
Ere it can voyage free ;
When shall it break this narrow husk,
And fly from discords and the dusk
On happy wings to Thee ?

It frets a little but in love,
For visions drawing me above
The mire where pilgrims plod ;
And thrills with the inflowing sap
To drop when mellow in Thy lap,
O beautiful sweet God.

Outside the petty stir and strife
It feels the pulse of larger life,
And the great grinding wheels,
That measure throughout Time and Space
For every creature its one place—
And quickens as it feels.

It gathers to its kernel all
The graces of each blessed fall
By which we upward rise,
And through the thwarting bolt and bar
Smells in fragrance from afar
The flowers of Paradise.

It daily grows more fat and fair,
And hungers for its native air
Above this little bound ;
While awful powers with range profuse
Within it form, and were abuse
But for the holy ground.

For here a tiny bud is seen
And there a shoot of living green
That trembles into fire,
And from the very sin and soil
Of conflict and the endless toil
It fashions its desire.

No heavy cross, no thorns in bliss
That change to blossom come amiss,
Or stay its soaring trust ;
It finds in each affliction sent
Some glad and gracious nutriment,
And turns to jewels dust.

My soul grows riper every hour
Alike in desert dearth and shower,
From rapture and the rod ;
It stretches always through the night
Away from earthly lures, to light
And to its kindred God.

When shall it burst from grave-like gloom
Into its young rejoicing bloom,
A golden butterfly ;
Whose bread is not the pavement stone,
But the pure love of God alone—
Whose home Eternity ?

THE LAUGHTER OF THE LORD.

“ He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh—the
Lord.”

We are going up or downward at a headlong heedless
pace,

And the Lord can only tell
When He rings the judgment bell,

What must be the final ending of this helter skelter race
And the blind and brute contending for the spoils and
gilded space—

If it shall be heaven or hell.

We are drifting with new teraphs to an unfamiliar shape,
And it may be form of seraphs and it may be form of ape;

As we ramble on and scramble

In a most ungodly speed,

Changing every day our creed,

Hanging crowns upon the bramble

And neglecting flower for weed;

While we flirt and lie and gamble

(But do little unless fee'd)

For the loaves and for the fishes

And the larger cups and dishes,

Though in nothing else agreed;

And with only our good wishes,

For the fools who don't succeed.

O we feast among the dying and we dance upon the
dead,

And with tears of orphans crying do we butter all our
bread

And the souls of women sighing are our silken dresses'
thread;

As we hurry on and scurry

Through the welter and the worry,

For the scarlet robes and honours

Or the new antique Madonnas;

While on breaking hearts and broken china heedlessly
we tread,

And the sneer is gaily spoken and the snare of falsehood
spread

By our rulers with each token of morality but dread;

As with merry song and zither

Which have lightly brought us hither

We are hastening, none knows whither,

On the darkness to its double and the riddle yet
unread

The triumph or the trouble—though the Lord is
overhead,

Though the Lord is overhead.
 When the serpent Silence hisses and the tempest now
 is near,
 Between kissing and the kisses, between weeping and
 the tear,
 When the wise owl on the rafter
 Of the belfry holds his tongue,
 Where the iron throats are hung
 As he looks before and after—
 Then I seem between the moonrise and the moon at
 times to hear
 When the night is at its noonrise, like faint thunder in
 my ear,
 Far away the awful Laughter
 Of the laughing of the Lord,
 As he whets His judgment sword
 Ere He rides on high abroad,
 Thronèd on the winds His chariot
 In the clouds above Him solemn,
 Like a white cathedral column
 And the clouds beneath that cling,
 With his doom for each Iscariot
 Who is traitor to his King.
 In the pauses of the battle, in the respite of the lost,
 When the death-bolts do not rattle on the breastplates
 torn and tost
 With the buffets of the victors, ere the flaming doors
 are slammed
 By the mute infernal lictors on the wretches doomed
 and damned ;
 In the lull between the shadow and the glinting of the
 shine
 When the grasses of the meadow have the ruddy look
 of wine,
 While the passion of the praying is not bodied forth in
 prayer
 And the hand that would be slaying has not fallen as a
 slayer,
 As the maiden with relenting of ripe lips and heaving
 breast

Will not yield the full consenting to the feared and
longed-for rest ;

In the sweet and sudden capture of the moment ethical
And the sacred secret rapture under fast and funeral,
In all interludes and breathing-spaces of the day and
night,

Ere the thought has found its wreathing word or deed
has leapt to light ;

O I hear before and after
Every intertwined repose,
As eternities unclose,
The divine and dreadful Laughter
Of the laughing of the Lord,
As if on the sky's blue rafter
It recoiled and re-arose
At the laughing of the Lord ;

O I hear beyond the leasing of our utmost life in joy,
And in sadness never-ceasing round all time as though
a toy,

Inextinguishable numbers long and slow and soft and
sweet

Mingled as with fires and slumbers and the snow's
white wingèd feet,

In a musical emotion beyond melody and still
With a calling to devotion of an awful iron Will,
An infinity of throbbings as upon a thousand chords
Out of love's impassioned sobbings and the muffled
clash of swords,

In unutterable pity and unutterable power
Dew to toilers of the city and to blighted hopes a
flower,

But most terrible and holy in the murmur of the marts,
With a lifting for the lowly and a healing to sore hearts.
Rolling down the endless ages, and for all with tender
pleas

Through the sternest of the stages like the wash of
far-off seas.

We are always upward going
To the stars, or storming back
Down to the forbidden track ;



While we hurry on in flurry,
 And but little care or know,
 With the gnawing tooth of worry,
 Save that yet we forward go
 To new issues and new tissues,
 Which for ever form and flow,
 In our polities and flesh
 And the makings and the breakings
 As we rise and fall afresh.
 And it may be that the finding in our learning and our
 schools
 Still is nothing but the binding of the sacrificial cord
 To the altar and the axes that are sharpening for the
 fools,
 At the taking of His taxes by the judgment of the Lord;
 And the pearls of splendid fancies that deceive the
 deaf and blind
 Are the froth of false romances from a dark distempered
 mind,
 And a curse is on the heaping of the wise or wealthy
 hoard
 Which will crumble at the reaping of the judgment of
 the Lord.
 When I see the sin and folly
 And the crowned and conquering fault,
 But the Christ hid in the holly,
 And the feasting like a vault—
 When I see the sin and folly,
 Then I wonder that in thunder
 Flashes not the final "Halt!"
 And between the lavish courses of fair women and red
 wine,
 The delights of Heaven and horses and the swilling as
 of swine,
 And the garbage of divorces and the crowding of the
 shrine,
 In the little hesitations for the penance or the lust
 And the dainty calculations where the trimmings vie
 with trust
 Or artistic expectations from the ethics of the dust ;

Lo, upon the painted rafter I perceive the hanging
sword
And the sentence that comes after and reverses our
award,
And I hear the awful Laughter of the laughing of the
Lord.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Between daylight and the dawning under twilight's
tender awning
Came a vision bright to me,
With its treasures offered me—
Came an Angel with a message, came an angel with the
presage
Of the better things to be
And the fairer sights to see,
Looked in sadness on my errors, smiled away my foolish
terrors;
As a mother watching kindly o'er her baby straying
blindly
Takes it safely on her knee,
So the Angel lifted me
From the turmoil and the dreary toil that left me wan
and weary
High above the wicked welter of the evil to the shelter
Of the many-fruited tree,
With its happy healing branches and the only balm
that staunches
Earthly wounds and human weakness of the souls that
turn in meekness
To its shadow full and free,
And the shine that cannot flee.
And he said, "O timid mortal, why outside the open
portal
Homeless, helpless dost thou linger, knocking with a
doubtful finger,
When these blessings are for thee,
In their riches all for thee—

When God's love, a boundless ocean, answering the
 least devotion,
 Rolls around and for no fee?
 Lay aside thy sinful burden and accept the holy guerdon
 Which He gives and only He.
 Lo, without the gate are knolling death-bells and the
 billows tolling
 Pitiless, and on thy lee
 Hungry rocks of cruel iron frown forbidding and environ
 Those delicious sunny gardens where the temptress
 reigns and hardens
 With distress, as none but she—
 Beautiful and false is she.
 But within the pearly porches, where no heat of summer
 scorches
 And no icy shaft of winter's angry rain or snowflake
 splinters
 On the pilgrims tired and trembling and in loneliness
 dissembling
 Vainly with heroic features sadness of poor hunted
 creatures,
 Falling silent two and three—
 Walk the blessed ones, and we
 Know the truth behind the curtain of the sense and its
 uncertain
 Avenues that have no ending but the grave and keep
 descending,
 And behold the Vision (shrouded here) in all its bliss
 unclouded
 Bathing in the boundless ocean of the love beyond
 emotion,
 Where with all do all agree;
 And these treasures are for thee;
 Enter in and drink the juices dropping from their
 sacred sluices,
 Shed as if alone for thee."
 So I passed the gracious portal, and in taking food
 immortal,
 Drank eternity through me.

**" PRAISE-GOD-BAREBONES." I.**

I'll praise the Lord with any man,
I'll praise the Lord with none,
For life is but a little span
And little have I done ;
But when I sing
I feel a king
Upon a royal seat,
And then I rise
Above the skies
And dine on royal meat ;
For then I am a heavenly harp in spite of all my spare
bones,
Although the godless rabble carp and call me " Praise-
God-Barebones."

Come, sinners, send your praises up
And with a goodly shout,
To give the Lord a brimming cup
And starve the devil out ;
For Satan flees
From bended knees
And from the holy strain,
And when the sound
Of praise goes round
His worst assaults are vain ;
I am the Master's chosen voice in spite of all my spare
bones,
Although the world may still rejoice and call me
" Praise-God-Barebones."

I'll praise the Lord with lusty breath,
He's worthy to adore,
I'll magnify Him to the death
Through life and evermore ;
Howe'er the fools
Of scornful schools
Deride the hymns I raise,
If I am lean
There's nothing mean
About my swelling praise ;



I'm builded on the blessed Rock in spite of all my
spare bones,
Although the wicked people mock and call me "Praise-
God-Barebones."

Come, fellow worms, who war with sin,
Lift your thanksgivings well
And make the house of song, wherein
The Lord delights to dwell ;
I am but clay
Who sing away
To quench my mortal thirst,
And this poor heart
With just one part
Must ever sing or burst ;

I've sung the guilty burden off in spite of all my spare
bones,
Although the adversaries scoff and call me "Praise-
God-Barebones."

I'll praise the Lord through every change
With loyal word and deed,
His glory through the realms I range
Shall be my only creed ;
Though darkly pent
His instrument
I lie within His hand,
A rugged lute
Awake or mute

To carry His command ;
But large and lovely is my end in spite of all my
spare bones,
Although fat bulls of Bashan rend and call me "Praise-
God-Barebones."

PRAISE-GOD-BAREBONES. II.

I have praised the Lord in every place,
From pavement to the pillory,
When rotten eggs wrote on my face
The devil's rude artillery ;

They cropt my ears, till iron tears
Filled eyes that were unwilling,
The cruel stocks and sturdy locks
Have done their best at killing.
No wonder flesh and fat avoid a spectacle of spare bones,
And my leanness is so unalloyed it makes me "Praise-
God-Barebones."

I have praised the Lord at every time
In darkness and imprisonment,
And sunk like Jeremy in slime
With rags for my bedizenment ;
I have bearded priests and other beasts
And faced the very lion,
Despite the rack and daily lack
To serve my God in Sion ;
I never found the time to feed my miserable spare bones,
And grew no stouter on the creed that left me "Praise-
God-Barebones."

I have praised the Lord in every way
In town and desert dreariness,
When hands were lifted up to slay
And life was utter weariness ;
I have wrestled long in sacred song
With gilded vice and varlet,
And thundered truth to titled youth
Or Jezebels in scarlet ;
And though they mocked my meagre flesh and counted
all my spare bones,
My soul within was plump and fresh while I was
"Praise-God-Barebones."

I have praised the Lord with every part
And in the teeth of devilry,
With lungs and lips and valiant heart
And raised a solemn revelry ;
I have gladly starved when beggars carved
Rich capons for their dinner,
And gathering foods from pious moods
Yet holier waxed and thinner ;

The winter cold and summer heat made havoc with my
 spare bones,
 I little cared to drink or eat if ever "Praise-God-
 Barebones."

THE PALACE OF PRAISE. III.

Sat in his spare bones Praise-God-Barebones
 Tuning his lusty pipe,
 Homely his vesture, humble his gesture,
 Richer his soul and ripe ;
 Lean was his fleshy house, and yet freshly
 Touched with a heavenly ray,
 Shed by the glory where he sat hoary
 Praising his God alway ;
 Ancient his rusty garments, and dusty
 Only from wrestling long—
 He single-handed, he with withstood
 Evil and subject wrong ;
 Sharpening the edge of song,
 Sharpening it merrily, sharpening it verily
 Keen on good forges, keen against orgies
 Licensed and stout and strong ;
 Solemnly living but by thanksgiving
 Turned to a two-edged sword,
 Loudly and lonely praising and only
 Praising the blessed Lord.
 Praise ye the Lord !
 Praise ye the Lord !

Toiled in his spare bones Praise-God-Barebones
 Daily a drudge for truth,
 Worn to a skeleton only to tell it on,
 Giving his years of youth
 Bright as the morning, meat for the scorning
 Lust of a godless time,
 Draped like a cerement soiled from experiment
 Taught by the graveyard grime.
 Black was his raiment, mark of repayment
 Offered by evil man—

Sign of his sorrows felt for the morrow's
 Doom and the judgment ban,
 After this earthly span,
 Sure for the sinners now though the winners—
 Badge of lamenting, shown by repenting
 Seeking an outward plan.
 Laboured he dimly onward and grimly,
 Heaping his pious hoard,
 Gauntly upraising palace of praising,
 Praising the blessed Lord.
 Praise ye the Lord !
 Praise ye the Lord !

SPECTACULA MUNDI. IV.

I have praised the Lord with singing, I have praised
 the Master long,
 For the Sabbath bells kept ringing in my heart to
 evensong,
 While I waged a war with evils in high places and the
 shrine
 And the errors that like weevils sapt the core of things
 Divine.
 Ah, I hated graven images unto which poor dupes
 knelt down,
 And had many goodly scrimmages with the Scarlet
 Woman's gown
 Till I tore away the mummery that had hid the hateful
 lie
 And exposed the foolish flummery by which kings and
 peoples die ;
 And beneath the mitre's jewel I laid bare the falsehood
 foul
 Like a crawling serpent cruel, and the satyr's monkish
 cowl
 Could not veil from me the leering eyes and fat
 voluptuous lips—
 Yea, I checked their proud careering when I smote
 with words like whips.

Once I went for a black-letter cheat with round and
rosy face,
Who was but a snare and fetter with his hypocrite's
grimace,
To idolators and actors all deluded by the paint
Which might mimic benefactors, but could never make
a saint ;
He was done upon a panel, that looked like a tavern
board,
And esteemed a holy channel for the blessings of the
Lord ;
For the votaries before him bowed and kissed his
sinful feet,
And they quarrelled to adore him in the temple and the
street.
So I girded me for battle, and I chose me goodly
stones
Which were sharp for Romish cattle and the idols set
on thrones,
While the spirit on my spare bones breathed the victory
of trust,
And I fearless Praise-God-Barebones ground the
bauble into dust.

I break the coloured windows with their harlotries or
hue,
And the Papists looked like Hindoos when I scourged
them black and blue ;
For I had the zeal of Jael, and my hand was Jehu's
sword,
When he slew the priests of Baal for the honour of
the Lord.
And the Dagons from their niches, lo, I tumbled
without heed
Into fragments with their riches that had made their
thousands bleed
And ten thousand to perdition turned from pastures
fair and green,
With their solemn superstition the more dread because
unseen.

I defaced the tinsel wrappings, and in ruin wrote my
name
On the borrowed plumes and trappings which they
flaunted to their shame ;
And I gloried in corrections, and with glee my missiles
cast
At their Romish resurrections, as God's own iconoclast.
I have stabled my stout horses where His liegemen
kept no troth
With the Christ in loud divorces, and now worshipt
Ashtaroth,
In the fanes where gods were coffered and they bowed
to scraps of bread
And the sacrifice was offered and the heathen table
spread.
Then I trampled on the altars and the conjurors' vile
tricks,
While my beasts trailed loose their halters over
shattered candlesticks
And the incense lamp and censer and the mockery of light
Which left darkness only denser and proclaimed the
heathen night.
I defiled the idol vessels wherein wickedness was
wrought,
And had many righteous wrestles with the foes who
vainly fought ;
For like iron were my spare bones, and as Samson
burst the cords,
And I was but Praise-God-Barebones, and the battle
was the Lord's.

There is scarce a fane in Merry England where my
judgment mark
Has not graved a witness very clear athwart each
pagan ark,
If it guarded not the living oracles of truth and God
And the gravings were thanksgiving for the strength
that by me trod.
For my heart was sound and human and my heart was
not my own,

While I loathed the Scarlet Woman and the tares that
 she had sown
 In the wheat by her adultery and among our choicest fields
 With no niggard or desultory hand for bitter harvest
 yields.
 I was to my Maker married, and for him strove
 sternly on
 And with Him I spoiled and harried the fleshpots of
 Babylon ;
 As in penance without pity I descended on the vice,
 And from country shades and city rose the solemn
 sacrifice.
 Ah, a pure and pleasant savour smelled the Lord
 when all the blood
 Of the foes who scorned His favour was shed in no
 stinted flood,
 While the Smithfield fires and faggots took in turn
 their carnival
 On the Roman moths and maggots who had held high
 festival.
 And I knew no paltry truckling for old principles and
 names,
 When I cast the babe and suckling with their parents
 to the flames,
 And I drowned their puling voices and compassion that
 would stay
 In the rapture that rejoices and the psalms that bid us
 slay.
 I was ever first to kindle the brave spark's avenging
 scourge,
 And to feed if it should dwindle the good bonfires that
 would purge ;
 Though they also scorched my spare bones and
 whatever taint lurked in,
 But scotched never Praise-God-Barebones, who was
 spared to spare not sin.

 But I could not see the lighting of a candle or a cross,
 Without hands that itched for fighting and to purify
 the dross ;

And a missal or a relic or a musty-fusty bone
Made my feelings un-angelic and my bosom hard as
stone.

Aye, a sculpture or the gilding of a Jezebel or shrine
And the frescoes on a building that degraded the Divine,
And the virgins that had nothing of the glory but the
name

With their poor pretence at clothing and a fig-leaf and
their shame,

And an aureole or *nimbus* round some never-living saint
Or a daubing of some *limbus fatuorum* in red paint,
All awoke in me a jealous passion for insulted God
While they nerved my arm to zealous reckoning with
torch or rod.

O I was not one who tasted only wrath and then would
cease,

But I smashed the idols basted with their own hot
candle grease

And I brayed them into powder, as did Moses with the
calf—

While uplifting praises louder, for I did not ought by
half—

And I mixed it with the sweeping of the cloister and
the sink,

In a cup of woe and weeping for idolators to drink.

And I burnt a holy feather from the wing of Gabriel

With the priest and goose together, and I stood as
sentinel;

I was filled with righteous anger and consumed by
pious wrath,

At the lies and godless languor of the pilgrims on their
path,

When I fasted in my spare bones though they grew so
fat and kicked

At the fare of "Praise-God-Barebones" and their
dainty dishes licked.

If I suffered much, yet over all my perils in the end
Did I triumph with Jehovah as my Captain and my
Friend.

For He shielded me and shattered by my arm that was
 His tool
 Enemies and ills, and scattered the proud scorers and
 the school
 Of the wisdom turned to water and the strength that
 proved but weak
 When the Lord arose to slaughter and in thunder came
 to speak.
 Then the mockers were as stubble, and the majesty of
 man
 Just a breath or passing bubble in His universal plan.
 Though behind the cart-tail haltered I was dragged and
 stoned and scourged,
 At my pangs I never faltered, if the wicked round me
 surged
 In a bloody sea of sorrow with the mire of sin they cast,
 For I knew the judgment morrow must be victory at
 last.
 I was but at best God's little mortal weapon, great in
 trust,
 To show earthly pomp was brittle and restrain the pride
 of lust.
 So He used me to His glory for a year or for a day
 On a service grim and gory when His vengeance had
 its way,
 Or to be His chosen trumpet of the Truth and gather
 home
 The poor outcast and the strumpet in His mercy's
 boundless dome.
 And if sometimes in divining His decrees I read amiss
 He would plunge me in refining furnaces or shame's
 abyss,
 Or on whetstones of affliction sharpen me to finer
 point
 And with trouble's benediction my unworthy head
 anoint,
 And yet humble more my spare bones or a season lay
 aside
 To lift higher "Praise-God-Barebones" though blas-
 phemers should deride.

I had holy recreation still as one of the elect
When we talked Predestination, but as man to man
 erect,
With the sword and with the battle and the arguments
 of steel
And the iron rain and rattle which all heretics could
 feel.
Though I liked a godly sermon with a loud and lusty
 roll
When the text like dew of Hermon came refreshing to
 the soul,
And stout doctrine was expounded (while my hand
 condensed a fist)
Till the sinner sank confounded by some stalwart
 Calvinist,
As he piled up proof on reason and with scripture
 clenched it all
Against tenets that were treason to the God of John
 and Paul,
With his many points and "lastly" after three hours
 at a stretch
While he showed the Word was vastly more than any
 impious wretch
With his candlesticks and crotchet and the Fathers and
 the Church
Which had truth but strove to botch it and left
 starvelings in the lurch ;
When the Spirit breathed in power on the erring and
 the lost,
And we had a heavenly shower like the fall of Pentecost.
O the vestures and the cassock which they borrowed
 right from Rome,
Could not save them from the hassock which I fulminated
 home
When my orthodox emotions craved an outlet and
 redress,
If I found the false devotions of mere superstitiousness.
I would keep a sound theology at whatever risk or price,
With fierce fractions for apology of the Roman
 sacrifice ;

And however hurt, my spare bones were as ready as
before
At the bid of "Praise-God-Barebones" to destroy or to
adore.

No one heard the worldly laughter of transgressors on
my lips,
When the hope of the hereafter with its wholesome
sad eclipse
Filled my breast with sacred glowing and a reverent
great calm
Like a fountain overflowing, that inspired each act or
psalm.

From the carnal earth confusements I abstained with
rigid zeal

And I gat no fit amusements save in testimony's seal,
When the passion of the martyrs spurred my spirit and
defied

Thrones and thunders, lords and garters, and aloud I
testified.

For my pleasures all were serious, I rejoiced in prayer
and praise

And religious joys mysterious which might quicken and
upraise

Soul and conscience to the summit of the loftiest life,
and sound

Deeps that never mortal plummet could attain or yet
had found.

But the thought of execution, when the rebels and
their hoard

Met with righteous retribution at the coming of the
Lord

And the spoiler bowed to capture and false prophets
went to doom,

Was to me a thought of rapture and it glorified the
gloom.

O the bliss of just damnation for all men, except the
few

Who from tears and tribulation in the fire were born
anew,

Was the meat that always nourished me beneath the
cross of care ;
And though unbelievers flourished and believers had no
share
In the prizes and the portions which in malediction fell,
When I pictured their contortions and their agonies in
hell,
I waxed merry and my spare bones danced to echoes of
their groans
And the heart of "Praise-God-Barebones" found sweet
music in their moans.

I have lived in many ages, but I never would recant
And am proud of all the stages I have striven as
Protestant,
With my principles of rigour and the true celestial
seeds
Which inspired unearthly vigour in the dead and dying
creeds.
I have guided glorious factions as a counsellor and
friend,
Through the predetermined actions to the predetermined
end,
While I made and unmade history in the dungeon and
the stocks
And from Rome's accursed mystery tore the veil and
opened locks ;
To let in the air of freedom and let out the poison
breath,
That the Lord might reign in Edom and the palaces of
death
And lose nought of the fair total of His righteous dues
and laud,
When I crushed the sacerdotal arm and tyranny of
fraud.
And though one in a minority, Athanasius-like I stood
In the battle with authority for the scriptural and
good—
For our liberties' fruition, and the conscience and the
man,

Against churches and tradition and the Pope and
 priestly ban ;
 And though pilloried and branded, and with mutilated
 flesh
 Under torture single-handed I have died ; I rose afresh
 From the unreleasing portal of the tomb that burst for
 me,
 Who for ever was immortal, and for ever more will be.
 Call me fanatic, dissenter, or a ranting, canting knave,
 Stone me, burn me, I re-enter the old world if through
 the grave ;
 But to triumph in my spare bones over error and its
 spell,
 And to heap as " Praise-God-Barebones " yet more
 hecatombs in hell.

THE MAGIC WAND.

Through the long years I groped
 Dimly, in silence utter closing me like a shutter
 Round, while I vainly hoped.
 All beyond me was gloom, wrath, and relentless hate
 Beckoning but to doom and a predestined fate.
 Feebly with foolish riving did I essay to burst
 Forth with a frantic striving, far as a mortal durst.
 Nothing replied but sound
 Made by my own dull cry, mocking the agony
 Still with a drear rebound.
 Whither could I look up, into a Face Diviner ?
 Where, though in furnace, sup with the supreme
 Refiner ?
 How should I guide my stumbling steps that had found
 no track,
 Save of despair and humbling, homeward from sin and
 wrack ?
 Then lo, a prayer, though weak
 Yet with a mighty shaping, dropt in unmeant escaping
 From lips unframed to speak ;
 Shot by the shadowed heart, full as a winter well,

Hiding in tears apart from mirth or marriage bell.
 But in a moment Pity came, and I knew not whence,
 As on a sunless city falls day's magnificence.
 Not like an empty wraith,
 It met my moulding hand which grew to its command—
 The magic wand of faith.
 O from the dreadful Night, out of the blank past seeing,
 This with its daring light called a new bourne to being;
 Free beyond bars and thunder forming a bliss and clue,
 It clove the clouds asunder which veiled God's rose of
 blue.

Now master of tears and toil,
 Fashioning fiery leaven, I make my hope and heaven
 And hive the future spoil.
 While thus the present lot, the lack and dire distress,
 The unequal bane and blot, get here a rich redress.
 For now I build at pleasure and make the balance right,
 With fairer weights and measure correcting this sad
 plight.
 I have whatever state
 Is chosen, and poverty and pinched mortality
 With worlds I compensate.
 So when the lightning slays or cares bring evil fretting,
 I hold above their ways my kingdom without setting.
 Things round me pale or perish, but death cannot come
 nigh
 The spaces which I cherish, my boundless peace on high.

THE NOTE OF NATURE.

Brother, I mark how all the many things
 Which people these great lands,
 The thought, the thunder,
 The harp of life that has a thousand strings,
 The master with his cosmic hands
 Who makes and breaks asunder;
 The cheek's delicious rose that turns so pale,
 The soul that must be shriven
 Ere it may peaceful lie;

These every one will utter the full tale,
Which unto each is given—
Only do thus and die.
The meanest lichen on the humble stone
Which hardly greets the eye
In garb of yellow,
Has yet a glory on its russet throne
The seat of pure Divinity,
And claims in that its fellow ;
It shall express the burden of its life,
The story that it bringeth
Of lesser lights and shades,
And though it have no part in broader strife
Unto itself it singeth—
Only does this and fades.

Nor is the Father, who created all,
Diverse from us herein ;
Yet He is dying
In works, that reach perfection but to fall ;
And is to every growth akin,
Which speaks some truth in flying.
In each new blossom and in each glad bird,
Which waves a wing or petal
Of splendour and is gone,
He moves and by His spirit they are stirr'd ;
He shines in moss and metal,
And then He passes on.

And thus the awful breath of living song
Is mine a moment space,
And it must utter
Whate'er it will—I may not do it wrong ;
And I am carried to my place,
A leaf that can but flutter.
I have no choice except to be the note
Whereon a while it lingers,
In tempest from the north
Or sweetness of the south and suns remote ;
I feel it like God's fingers,
And then it passes forth.

"OPEN THOU MINE EYES."

No revelation, Lord, we ask
Who humbly look to Thee,
But just behind the earthly mask
Of little things and daily task
The living truth to see ;
For if we had the trustful eyes
Which give the larger ken
And fashion very children wise,
The lowliest work in land and skies
Would be transfigured then ;
We should but find our judgments mean,
And nothing common or unclean.

The daisy would shine out more fair
Than any flower or tree,
As much Thy footstool as the air
Which is Thy chariot, and a stair
Uplifting us to Thee ;
For surely what is scattered far
And wide Thou lovest most,
It breathes a glory which no star
Of all the dazzling orbs that are
Has ever made its boast ;
And in its oft repeated part,
It tells the secret of Thy heart.

The revelation all is plain
And loudly points to Thee,
Were not our vision dark and vain
Which moves a prisoner in its chain—
And nought but error free ;
Though still Thy love is written large
In creeping moss or man,
Eternity is each thing's charge,
The Infinite o'erflows its marge
And speaks Thy perfect plan.
Nor lacks the tiniest way or weed,
A glimmer of immortal seed.



But we, O Lord, are madly blind,
And yet refuse to see
The Wisdom chanted by the wind,
The Power that follows us behind
In mercy sent by Thee ;
Though Thou Thyself, in good and ill,
Dost show as pattern true,
And stamp the wonder of Thy will
The law of star and daisy still,
And one celestial clue.
But ere Thou art our inward light,
We walk for ever in the night.

THE STAR OF THE MAGI.

The night was very dark and dread,
Above me knelled the thunder
As if with tolling to the dead,
And flints rose cruel under ;
While through the clouds like funeral shrouds
Which it did tear asunder,
A ghastly moon glared overhead.
But in that close and confined night,
Which hid the roads and meadows
With arms of awful shadows,
I had a brave and blessed light.
For in my bosom burned a lamp
Supplied with lustre solemn
Which spoke, as from a reverend shrine
Some secret glory saith—
“ Behold the oil and sacred stamp,
Which only court and column
Contain that house the Man Divine ”—
Because I walked by Faith.
And now I cannot wander far
Or miss the haven holy,
Who have the Magi's steadfast star
A light within me lowly.

The day was very drear, and stone
And thorn pursued my paces,
While famine with its bitter zone
Girt me in desert spaces ;
An angry wind, which snarled behind,
Struck me in sudden places ;
And still I did not step alone.
I had for ever by my side,
In wastes all lean and yellow,
The friend that was my fellow
Prepared to guard me round and guide.

For with me though unseen there went
The mate of many a trial,
That often had most truly proved
The falsehood of each wraith ;
And thus, if pale and penitent
With fast and sore denial,
In trembling joy I onward moved—
Because I walked with Faith.
But now I cannot lose the way,
And in my journey stumble ;
I simply pause to praise, or pray
For love to keep me humble.

GOD'S TUNERS.

Out of His fulness, God was good,
He gave the hungry lands
Their purple hill and waving wood,
The rivers' sapphire bands,
The mighty dew which doth renew
Our earth with gentle hands,
And golden grace of womanhood—
But still they made demands.
He stript Himself of garments fair
And tore His Heart asunder,
To paint the blue upon the air
And the green carpet under ;
He hung his halo in the hair



Of virgins mounting the white stair,
Through death, to thrones of thunder.
He watered with His richest tears
The world and down the rolling years
Sent on that fruitful flood,
And washed away our cruel fears
In His own saving Blood.
But yet in the exceeding store
Of love and long dark lashes
Which kindled hearts of ashes,
The greedy nations craved for more.

But then He bared His mighty breast
And took the music out,
Which was the universe's rest
And fired the battle shout—
The voice we hear with inward ear,
In ministries of doubt ;
And soft it lay on souls opprest,
It compassed earth about.
He gave at last His very life
Which sets the planet singing,
And makes the sacrificial knife
A balm of angels' bringing ;
While in the lot with discord rife
And ruin and its wormy strife,
It came like roses clinging.
By cunning harp and prophet rune,
It put the weary lands in tune
And lorded over chance,
The winter turned to laughing June
And sorrow could but dance.
For in the bosom it was wine
Of sacramental chalice,
Which conquered care and malice,
And left the meanest drudge divine.

O joy beyond all words that are
Which is so wondrous strong,
It breaks the prison's iron bar

And remedies each wrong ;
It finds the gold beneath the mould
And spins the earth along,
Till we forget the scorn or scar—
God's liturgies of song !
The bruised maiden in the dust
Bent as a weeping willow,
The rover with red hand of lust
Whose bondsman is the billow,
The spirit eaten as with rust
All here revive their powers of trust,
And seek a soothing pillow.
It is a temple where we meet
And get repose for failing feet
Upon a common ground,
And prove the vilest fortune sweet
Within one sacred bound.
We drop the sadness and the sin
Wherein we rot and welter,
And see in this fair shelter
Both man and God are close akin.

And then at rare and solemn times
God sends His Tuners down,
To mend the mischief of the climes
When gathering troubles frown ;
They bring new strains for bitter pains
That mock the kingliest crown,
Until the globe with gladder chimes
Puts on a wedding gown.
They go about through darkling Space
Fresh melody to scatter
In notes that mark the Master's pace,
And thrill the deadest matter ;
For they have looked upon that Face
Giving them all their vital grace,
Which no one's praise can flatter.
And they have heard the Maker speak
The spell which they though dimly wreak
In mysteries of sound,



To cheer the wandering and the weak
Who walk their lonely round.
And with their healing harmonies
They open every portal,
And pour into this mortal
The breath of the eternities.

A GOOD REPORT.

O in a light most beautiful and sweet
Did Christ return from that drear dolorous land,
Crowned by His conquests, and with travelled feet
And benedictions in His open hand.
For He had triumphed over even death
And trod it low with His sublimer trust,
Which could not there be holden, and His breath
Enkindled to new life the mouldering dust ;
He bade it blossom with a sudden power,
When the old prisoning grave was spoiled and rent,
In that immortal resurrection flower—
The ransomed soul's young fair enfranchisement.

Death was a "shadow," as He said, and short
The tenure of its cold relaxing might,
And rich with comfort all the good report
He wrung from its inhospitable night.
For with the blessed olive branch He came
Back from the deluge impotent to drown,
Which by subjected sin but He could tame
Alone and captive evermore keep down.
For those grim walls of silence and despair
Crumbled and fell before His righteous road,
That human hearts at length might thus repair
In Him their hopes and drop the weary load.

No sorrow was the message that He brought
Out of the darkness which had wrapt Him round,
And quenched a season sight but not the thought
Of everlasting Love unbid, unbound ;
And not bereavement and the awful blank

In separation with its rayless gloom,
If for our future solace then He sank
Consenting to the judgment and the doom ;
And not the natural pain which we must know
Though God Himself shall wipe away our tears,
And the sad sentence laid on man below
Inevitable as the eclipse of fears.

Far otherwise the news, when he had run
That dreadful race which now no more is dim,
In the great glory of the unsetting Sun,
For those who trust and truly follow Him.
He said that it was well for mortals thus
To go, and death would be a pleasant place,
The door of life, which did uncloset us
The fulness of His own exceeding grace.
And though the grief and trouble might not cease
Which only taught us in His strength to stand,
The secret of the very grave was peace
And just the entrance to the Promised Land.

MY SPECULUM.

At times I let my fancy wander,
And with its *speculum* I ponder
The mysteries of Space ;
My travelled thought spreads out its wings
Beyond the utmost verge of things,
And spans the furthest place.
Then mirrored shape and awful measure
Of many an unknown hidden treasure
I gather on my glass ;
The far result of aimless toil,
An unimagined splendid spoil
Appearing not to pass.

Bright fantasies of fairy visions
Which once I deemed but soft derisions,
I see are lovely fact ;



And beautiful conjectured lights,
Buried beneath a thousand nights,
Leap into living act.
My starry dreams stand out in glory
And prove beyond the wildest story,
How strange realities ;
And in my very words I find
Unconscious witnesses to mind,
And fair theologies.

MY BRIDAL - CHAMBER.

O I am waiting for my Lord to come,
And dwell within the compass of this breast
Empalaced by Him as a fitting home,
Wherein He may a little while take rest,
Unworthy I shall ever be, but yet
I daily purge my humble house and sweep
The dim and dusty rooms for Him, and set
A table garnished with obeisance deep.
And I have emptied it of all things vile
By penitence of tears and holy fast,
To win one word of welcome or a smile
Which would bestow a bountiful repast.
I do renounce the squalid world and mean
Delights that only humour the vain flesh,
And make myself mere nothingness but clean
Whereon he can at pleasure build afresh.
The vacant chair stands ready for His seat,
A willing mind in duteous homage bent,
Responsive to His touch, that He may eat
And drink of utter love and be content.
This pure heart is prepared by sweetest thought
Like bridal-chambers with fair linen white
To take its King and Husband in, and wrought
Thereby with Him to beauty infinite.

GENESIS OF A SOUL.

Without a soul, like yours I came
Into these lands,
God builded fair this mortal frame
And gave me cunning hands ;
But there was something dimly needed,
Though all unheeded
And hardly missing at the first,—
A beautiful sad thirst.
But this at times I only felt
About me and not in me, seeing
No place or purpose when I knelt
For my dull being.

Without a soul, I had no part
With other men,
And a cold aching in my heart
Disturbed my narrow ken ;
Life was a round of impositions,
Though premonitions
Of awful ranges far beyond
Forbade me to despond.
The brute I was with stunted powers
Chafed in its mortal mansion,
It waxed aware of dazzling dowers
And craved expansion.

Without a soul, I could not fill
One office high,
And I went groping darkly still
When Heaven itself was nigh ;
A dearth with dreary nameless anguish
Which made me languish,
Fell deeper while it wrapped me round
With haunting hopeless bound.
I held no stake in earthly things
Nor trysting-place for common kindness,
And threatening shades and murmurings
Burst through my blindness.



Without a soul I might not tread
 Along the path,
 Which skirts the borders of the dead
 And compassed in with wrath.
 The little blank grew daily vaster
 And veiled disaster,
 Though glimpses of a higher state
 Dawned on me delicate.
 And with no interest or plan
 To lend my life a proper reason,
 I moved a creature not a man
 Born out of season.

Without a soul I travailed sore
 With solemn fears,
 I could not though I would adore
 With deaf and earthbound ears ;
 Until a child with plaything broken
 And grief unspoken,
 Rousing the love that in me lay
 Let in a shining ray ;
 But whence the sudden glory fell
 And what this new and second nature,
 I who accepted cannot tell
 Its legislature.

Without a soul I was not now
 An exile strange,
 And all my being seem to bow
 Responsive to the change ;
 A wellspring from its bases bubbling
 Dispersed the troubling,
 And through me poured the pleasant streams
 Of living dreams ;
 There was a stirring with a glow
 Like sunlight of the bluest weather,
 And secret powers above, below,
 All rushed together.

Without a soul I might not be
 A bondsman still,

When once the inner part of me
 Was touched by alien ill ;
 I lost myself to find in others
 And bruised brothers,
 Myself again but yet more bright
 And blest in borrowed light ;
 For in that little child forlorn,
 I in my barren cold captivity
 Was at a radiant hour re-born
 Into Divinity.

Without a soul I shall not live
 Though ages pass,
 And worlds turn pale and fugitive
 Or fade as flowers and grass ;
 I have the secret and assurance
 Of that endurance,
 Which though the mountains faint and fail
 Shall over all prevail ;
 And if I sometimes miss the clue
 Or fret in this poor human border,
 I am a portion of the true
 Eternal order.

"HAVE WE NOT ALL ONE FATHER?"

A common feeling
 Makes the mighty land
 So little, that with earth's rude reeling
 It seems to lie within the hand,
 And find a station more than even by gravitation—
 A force it never may withstand.
 It makes the universe a street
 In the same city,
 Where rival duties are not done
 And men and women gaily meet
 While out of pity,
 All just for others are as one.

A common danger
 Lends a kinship true



To bird and brute and friend and stranger,
And shows the binding secret clue ;
For there affection starts up with the lost direction,
And grants to each his vital due.
It seeks a single home in God,
From angry weather
And suffering with its thunder throes ;
It leads where Blessed Feet have trod,
And draws together
Into one rest divided foes.

A common treasure
In a guiding hope,
Metes prince and peasant with one sacred measure
And overshines in its blue cope ;
It links, like wedding ties, the souls that else were
shedding
Sweet blossoms with no power to ope.
It brings to beauty jangled parts
And gently carries
Its sacrament to the cold lip,
And joining sundered hands and hearts
Divinely tarries
For grace of holy partnership.

A common Father,
As the equal sky,
Alone prevails to gladden all and gather
The nations in one family ;
And by His giving of the light for living
Knits every age with sympathy.
And in the sorrow breathed by things,
The touch that mellows
Comes from His hand upraised to bless,
Which clasps us as with shadowed wings
And makes us fellows
In union of fair Christliness.

SHE PASSED IN MUSIC.

She passed in music, for her death
Was wonderful and fair ;
As if the Master with her breath
Did play His perfect air.
For all her life was leading up
Unto this gracious plan,
In sweetness like a loving cup
Until it over-ran.
And through her days' young festival
She kept a secret tune,
Which with its voices virginal
Made her bright bosom June.
Sometimes we heard or seemed to hear
The fragrance of a cry,
Which fashioned hope of solemn fear
And yet was mystery.
But in her shadow of sweet shame
She dreaded jest or doubt,
And only the dissolving frame
Could let its glory out.
She could not utter one small part,
Who treasures had to give ;
Till the great music broke her heart,
And dying learned to live.

DYING DAILY.

Father, I feel this heart of mine
Just from its very love
Must break, with all its precious wine,
In yearning so above.
I am so crushed by mercy's weight
And blessings yet to be,
I can no longer bear the freight
With which Thou loadest me.
It seems in praise's every burst
Of passion and desire,
As only true thanksgiving durst,

I must in song expire,
 Each moment is a miracle,
 A gift that cannot fade ;
 And in Thy tender crucible,
 I hourly am re-made.
 For what is this poor narrow breast
 That Thou should'st ever come,
 To live there as no passing guest
 And honour it as Home ?
 Ah, when I know I darkly lie
 So oft in bondage rude,
 At thought of Thee I daily die
 From utter gratitude.

— — —
 'YET THE STAR WAS THERE.'

I took my magic glass and swept the sky
 And found the systems there, the rhythmic romp,
 The centuried circuits and the measured fall
 Of planets pulsing through eternity ;
 I marked the wonder of the woven pomp,
 Wheel within wheel, and knew and loved them all.
 I mapt them with a careless eye, and went
 From star to star, as through his native land
 The master walks and communes with his kin ;
 They seemed by just my purpose to be bent,
 And moved in concert with my guiding hand—
 But everywhere I carried my own sin.
 I looked among my fellows, and I saw
 The common round of common thoughts and things ;
 No brighter maiden and no broader man,
 But dull submission to one dreary law,
 Instead of hush that heralds coming kings
 To mould the world with new majestic plan.
 Then in a moment rushed a sudden light
 Upon my glance, so dark to that which gave
 A clue and utterance to the whole—as where,
 In palaces of purple orient night,
 The wash of seas in some far coral cave
 Awakes dull eyes—and yet the star was there.

FALLING UP.

I lost my hopeless idle hold at length from little care,
For pride had made me over-bold and slew me
unaware ;

While, as I fell, a funeral-bell

Bade me for death prepare.

Earth swam before my swooning eyes, Time seemed itself
to pass

With all the pageants of the skies like pictures in a
glass ;

A burning scroll, my very soul

Shrank up as shrivelled grass.

Sin's gloomy garment wrapt me round, as deeper still I
went

Beyond the plummet's utmost bound, in its gray
cerement ;

With friends most dear, in ghastly fear

Dragged low by my descent.

For when I dropt in coward dread, to save myself I
threw

These arms in selfish haste outspread on lives that
blameless grew ;

And I the love, that bloomed above,

To one grim ruin drew.

But in the horror of my fall, unconscious, yet I prayed
With penitence that even through all my darkest deeds
had stayed ;

A broken cry of agony,

That would not be delayed.

A call for mercy and of grief shot heavenward as a dart,
Which in mere utterance was relief and more than
human art ;

A simple sigh, that mounted high,

Torn from my bleeding heart.

And in a moment then I found I was not sinking fast,
But risen and to a purer ground beyond the stormy
blast ;

And the blue sky laughed pleasantly,
Which had been overcast.
For when I dashed the golden cup of poison from my
grip,
I was forgiven and *falling up* that I might never slip;
While, swift to greet me, Mercy sweet
Laid kisses on my lip.

LIVING THE LIFE.

The Lord in mercy came to me
In all my blots and misses,
And spoke of blessed things to be—
His eyes looked full of kisses.
But on his head a shameful crown
Of thorns exceeding cruel,
My own, did weigh him sadly down—
And yet shone as a jewel.
While on his bruised and bended shoulder,
Borne as through bitter strife,
My cross, which seem to wear Him older
Living the life.

He laid the crown upon my head,
His own, with benediction,
That royally I thus might tread
His highway of affliction.
The thorns were very sharp but shot
Through me like new vitality,
And though the furnace fire was hot
It bathed in immortality.
Each little loss turned to an altar
With sacrificial knife,
And yet no moment could I falter—
Living the life.

He laid the cross upon my back,
His own, with words of healing;
Till all the stones, along the track,
Stood out like stars' revealing.
And every nail a silken glove

Grew out of woesome iron,
 Which as with arms of utter love
 My sadness did environ.
 And every wound was richer sweetness
 With milk and honey rife,
 And this poor soul got grand completeness—
Living the life.

And now we have a common heart
 In peace or angry weather,
 We do not have one thought apart—
 We bear and burn together.
 My very Crown of care it is,
 The thorns my only guerdon
 With all the suffering, and yet His
 No less the precious burden.
 The Cross, with which I would not tarry,
 A treasure dear as wife,
 He makes His own and loves to carry—
Living the life.

— — —

THE SORROW OF THINGS.

There was a sorrow at the heart of things,
 I thought and dreamed of gladness
 Among the shocks and overshadowings,
 And murmurs as of madness ;
 Where 'er I went, in daily discontent
 I found the foot of sadness.
 It wailed in winds, and sobbed in piteous pleas
 From the great surge of far tormented seas,
 Which broke on shores untravelled ;
 It trembled up, where fairies liked to sup
 That sipped the sweetness of the buttercup,
 A mystery not unravelled.

It made the monarch's crown a ring of fire
 And clouded all the glitter,
 While in the maiden's delicate attire
 Its thread was black and bitter ;
 And the sweet bird, by God's own music stirred,



Learnt thus its mournful twitter.
And on the dazzling blue of doming skies
It lay like unshed tears on troubled eyes,
And whispered they were mortal ;
It seemed to slip from even the rosiest lip,
And stronger than the web of statesmanship,
Creaked in the palace portal.

But then betwixt the moonrise and the morn
When the tired earth was resting,
I saw a cherub playing with a thorn
That pierced a king's investing ;
And oft he plied the cruel point, and tried
It for his own true testing.
And then into the twilight of my brain
Dawned slowly the pure blessedness of pain,
And passion's blood-red stigma ;
The causeless care which killed and did not spare,
Now to the laughter of a child laid bare
The soul of its enigma.

And the old sorrow at the heart of things,
Became the secret flutter
Of beautiful but prisoned angel wings,
And words they could not utter ;
Which but for grief would never find relief,
Behind the fleshly shutter.
While all the misery was to kindness kin,
Or just the sunlight fretting to come in
And flood the life with glory ;
For only thus might insight come to us,
By awful searchings yet most amorous
To tell God's dear love story.

COLLOQUIUM CUM DEO.

"Come, now, and let us reason," said the Lord,
"In peace of night and purple weather,
And I will listen to my servant's cry !"
But he was leaning on His judgment sword.

When we in silence talked together.
I said, "This little fleece of ours is dry,
Nor do thy blessed fountains yet afford
To silver one dear swallow's feather,
When round us dew is falling pleasantly."
Heaven opened to my reach
And in the quiet spake a little bird, and brake
The waters on the beach.

"Acquaint thyself with Me, and I will stanch
Thy trouble," said the Lord, and nearer
He drew to me and veiled the awful fire,
And in His hand he held an olive branch.
"Though thou, my earthly son, art dearer
Than words can tell, yet vain is that desire ;
To know why on some separate rock or ranch
Rain comes not, while I am a Hearer
Still of the prayers that up to heaven aspire."
And in the dreadful calm
Which for a moment fell, a wind began to swell
And lifted up a psalm.

I hid my face in humble fear, and bent
Before His solemn presence kneeling ;
But then once more in gentleness He spake,
As one who played on some poor instrument
That owned but uttered not his feeling.
"To learn the least in truth thou must awake,
And comprehend the whole of continent
Or isle and every system wheeling
Through Space, for all of common ties partake."
And from the distant shore
Dim voices seemed to raise an ecstasy of praise,
And chanted evermore.

"Be patient with me, Lord," I cried, and laid
My forehead in the dust and shivered,
That I should commune with my Maker so ;
"But wherefore dost Thou give a partial aid,
When we do pine to be delivered
And watch how elsewhere sweet Thy wellsprings flow?
The sacrifice by us is also paid,

And this torn breast has quaked and quivered
With offerings free that stript and left me low."
And then a sudden cloud
Rose like a threatening hand, and darkened sea and land
That seemed to sigh aloud.

But in the stillness I did hear His Heart,
Which is the soul of Nature throbbing ;
As over me He breathed His blasting power,
Yet softened to one ray and without smart,
And cheered me in the shadow sobbing.
"*The dew is there*, if faith perceived the dower
And knew what makes its hidden treasure start,
Or took its own that needs no robbing ;
And, in thy waste, I see the watered flower."
But, lo, a happy hush
Dropt on my spirit spent, and all the Orient
Became one red-rose blush.

NUMBERED AND WEIGHED.

Lord, I know my days are numbered
And each throbbing of my heart,
Though I am with care so cumbered,
In creation's plan has part ;
And throughout the endless ages
Of forgotten stars and stages
First within Thy Love did start,
And from that most awful seat
Gave its earliest tender beat ;
And each noteless tiny second
Is as needful to the life as a century of strife,
And by Thee esteemed and reckoned.

Yes, each separate hair is counted
And the gain above the loss,
With the step I hardly mounted
Leading up to the sweet Cross ;
And before the world had being
In Thy calm eternal seeing
Fires were heated for my dross,

And the furnace and the throne
 Then were made for me alone ;
 All was done by Thy decision,
 And each slender detail mapt (though within the
 millions wrapt)
 By Thy great and wise prevision.

Every bit of me is measured
 By the wisdom without end,
 Every sigh or teardrop treasured
 By One closer than a friend ;
 Not an atom of my nature,
 But by Thee is meted stature
 And with Thine prepared to blend ;
 For Thou dost revive my sloth,
 And art strength and standard both.
 On my stains Thou pourest meetness,
 And hast from Thy very breast stript the royal righteous
 vest

Clothing me with Thy completeness.

Every act is weighed most kindly
 In those balances of Grace,
 And the weakness that walks blindly
 In Thy mercy finds a place—
 Just to that for ever fitted—
 Where I stand at peace acquitted,
 In the sunshine of Thy Face.
 Every effort, at Thy Feet,
 Has its value and is sweet,
 Though these earthly clouds may dim it ;
 If it only wants to be Christly, and is striven for Thee ;
 And Thy love breaks down its limit.

REHOBOTH.

In the world of toil I laboured as rolled periods by,
 Not like others drummed and tabored to the victory ;
 But with grief for ever wearing, crushed by burdens, as
 if bearing
 All eternity.



Foes with longer arms and stronger wills were surging
 round in wrath,
 And they thrust me farther off not without contempt
 and scoff
 From the purpose of my path.
 Insolence and purple pride swept above me in the tide
 Of a cruel art,
 As on pavement stone ;
 And unheeded and unneeded I appeared apart,
 Outside pity and a place where each had a resting-space,
 Useless and alone.
 Unto Bel they bowed the knee, or to naked Ashtaroth ;
 But a whisper spoke to me—" *Rehoboth.*"

In the many realms of Nature, lo, I wandered far ;
 Seeking for some legislature which upraised no bar
 To my lordship, where no other quarrelled with me, if
 my brother
 Swayed a lofty star.
 Weeds had holy tasks and lowly insects office set and
 sure,
 And a niche of honour each beyond vulgar wreck or
 reach
 Ordered and at last secure.
 But I was a wasted thing, bloomless flower and throneless
 king
 Separate from the rest,
 And to nothing born
 Out of season with no reason for a singing breast ;
 Never meant to blossom true into scarlet robes or blue,
 Just a barren thorn.
 I escaped the service seal, laid on even the midge or
 moth ;
 But I heard a trumpet peal—" *Rehoboth.*"

Thinkers rose with broad opinions covering all Time,
 And tall Poets had dominions over every clime ;
 While most ripe and reverend sages, with the murmur
 of their pages,
 Made a solemn chime.

I was singing too and ringing bells that could not do a
wrong,
In my humble quiet nook as I read the Sacred Book,
For the pensive evensong.
But they drowned my tiny note when I darkly sung,
and wrote
Now a tender line,
Then a pretty thought ;
And their louder strains and prouder echoed through
the shrine,
While my sad and sober tune like a rose too late for June
Looked but idly wrought.
Death seemed better, had I tied round my frame the
burial cloth ;
But a call in mercy cried—" *Rehoboth.*"
Crowded were the courts, and gilded nobles went and
came
Up the steps of marble builded to the Blessed Name ;
Souls of light and souls of learning, with the insufferable
yearning
Kindled to a flame,
For that knowledge which no college of the largest lore
can give ;
Ah, they held the wiser plan and the wisdom true, that
man
Not by bread alone may live.
Faces crowned with mystic might, awfully intent and
bright,
Moved on missions vast
Under that blue dome,
Armed with grateful love and fateful powers from their
high past,
And about the shine and shades of the temple colonnades
Sped, within their Home.
With one servant of His choice, could the master break
His troth ?
And afar a thunder Voice—" *Rehoboth.*"



BEAUTIFUL FOE.

Home of great thoughts, without, within,
A Voice I cannot smother,
Beautiful Foe and Brother,
Unmarked but not unmoved by sin
And to my every pulse akin,
Myself and yet Another !

The Maker and the Creature, mine,
So near and yon blue distance
Too far to be assistance !
But still Thy tendrils round me twine
Most human Thou and most divine,
Unseen but felt Existence.

Ah, from a Baby Thou hast grown
With me to riper graces,
And taken tiny paces
That trembled dearly with my own ;
Familiar still while all unknown,
And everywhere Thy traces.

Unutterably grand and vast,
Without a touch or tittle
Of flaw, yet to a brittle
Poor reed that quivers in the blast
A Fellow-Sufferer to the last,
Magnificently little.

Thy rays from each remoter star
Fall on me, and Thy savour
Of mercy, lends a favour
Like jewels to the shameful scar ;
And Thou art portal, and the bar
With prison's iron flavour.

The colour of the rose's bloom,
Is but Thy Face's blushing ;
And in the mother's hushing
That rocks her infant, Thou hast room ;
And in the horror and the gloom,
I hear Thy fountains gushing.

Thou art my Master and my Slave,
Who grantest me the vision
Turned only to derision ;
Thou doest more than all I crave,
Alike the cradle and the grave
Of every high decision.

Thy riches are my own, and still
From Thee I always borrow ;
Thou art the joy and sorrow,
Whereby with faltering hands I fill
The measured cup of good and ill,
O never-coming Morrow.

The Truth, and yet the hidden Heart
Of fairest dreams and fictions ;
Bright Presence in afflictions,
And yet most terribly apart
When buried lusts like ghosts upstart,
Sum of all contradictions.

My Heavenly Father, and the Child
Of these exalted fancies,
The rapture of romances ;
A blushing Furnace, and a mild
Dim Shadow shed on passions wild
And warring circumstances.

Dear Adversary and the Friend
To whom I fly from sinning ;
Lost in each selfish winning,
And gained when lavishly I spend ;
The Light, the Night, the glorious End
And ever-new Beginning.

The whole and Part of every fact
Or thought, my Bane and Blessing ;
For wrong the sure Redressing,
And breathing through the simplest act
O Life of every mortal pact,
Death is but Thy caressing.

THE GREATNESS OF GOD.

O God, Thou art so very wise
 And wonderfully tall,
 That unto Thee I cannot rise
 Who am exceeding small ;
 And darkling feet, that climb to greet
 Thy greatness, only fall.
 For I am a wee baby thing
 And helpless to Thy goodness cling,
 As to a mother's gown ;
 And lest I tumble from Thy lap
 Or meet with woe or evil hap,
 Thy Mercy keeps me down.

Thy Sweetness, as a swaddling robe,
 From trembling toe to chin—
 While it doth compass the wide globe,
 Despite the shame and sin—
 Yet wraps me round, in peace enwound,
 And tucks me warmly in.
 But if at times I suffer pain
 And dimly reach to Thee in vain
 Or feel a ruder shock,
 When threatening shadows on me shut
 And Thou art hidden, it is but
 The cradle that must rock.

Beneath Thy Majesty I rest
 As under some high tree,
 And hear the beating of the Breast
 Which yet I cannot see ;
 Each adverse air is just a stair
 And lifteth up to Thee.
 I know that nothing less than Love
 Is all below me and above,
 Though oft I wander blind ;
 And the broad marvel of Thy Power,
 As soft as dew upon a flower,
 Doth buttress me behind.

Crushed with Thy Grandeur I would make
A footstool on Thy floor,
Or be a mat for Thy dear sake
Laid at the temple door ;
And if the dust, before Thee thrust,
I never could be poor.
At night I sometimes may not sleep
From thinking of the dreadful deep
Of Thy surpassing Grace ;
I cannot fly from Thee, Thy breath
Is my whole life and very death
The dawning of Thy face.

EDEN FLOWERS.

I put my labour to the plough,
I wrestled with the surly land
And fought the cruel stone and weed ;
In hope that yet the fruited bough
Would blush in answer to the hand,
Which worked and planted living seed.
And, with the harrow, like an arrow
My prayer went up a golden creed,
As if it were a winged command.
I drudged through darkness, and no time
Was spared to hear the harvest chime ;
Though nothing came but barren blame.

I dropt my life itself, and sowed
My body in the hungry soil
And yielded to the yawning grave ;
I grudged no treasure, and I owed
Not any pulse of grievous toil
Nor service such as fits the slave.
And then a glory beyond story
Broke from it, which earth never gave
And tyrant death could not despoil.
For from the crumbling of my flesh
My faded years bloomed out afresh,
In strange new powers like Eden flowers.

I.—HELL.

MEMORY.

I did remember all my sins, they flocked
 Like gibbering ghosts and sheeted
 Unearthly shapes that mowed at me and mocked,
 Unsummoned and ungreeted ;
 And with a threatening hand and thwart
 Set gaze of features grim and swart,
 They came and frowned and fled.
 Old buried vices from forgotten graves
 Like skeletons upstarted,
 Re-kindling embers pale in sunless caves,
 And cursed me and departed ;
 But, ere they went, they did bequeath
 The cerements that hope enwreath,
 And left me broken-hearted.
 The charities of piety long past,
 No more with sweet perfuming
 About the error of my footsteps cast
 A gentle fair illuming ;
 And conscience, with its funeral bell
 Told only, *and the thought was hell—*
 A secret slow consuming.

II.—HEAVEN.

MEMORY.

I did remember all my brother's deeds,
 The loyalties and tender
 Shy ministries that, out of golden creeds,
 Bloomed with no passing splendour ;
 And in the shadow where he dwelt
 That we might shine, I richly felt
 The life that was surrender.
 The services of ripe and reverend use
 Whereby he was surrounded,
 The healing touch of light, and gifts profuse
 In which his path abounded ;—

I warmed my wintry heart, and drank
Of these pure fountains, though I shrank
Before his love confounded.

But O the praise was medicine to me yet,
That purged with gracious sifting,
And made a morning that could never set
Among these pageants drifting;
I gathered to me what he wrought
In blessing, *and heaven was the thought*—
And God's own great uplifting.

THE LOST SACRAMENT.

Wearied of men and babble and brute ways,
The wretched millround of the sordid days.
I turned to Nature and myself, and sought
A calmer refuge in the realm of thought,
And remedies for ills that had no cure
In earthly medicine. Gladly I went
Along a pathless road serene and sure,
Where all was so familiar and yet strange,
As if in search of some Lost Sacrament
And the great choosing beyond reach of change.
I saw my God in Nature, as we see
Through stained cathedral glass a form of grace
That shines and shifts and has no settled place
And here is One, and there the mystic Three
Or now as clear as sunlight and now dark;
A revelation both of sun and moon,
That gleams with many a blessed shape or boon,
And vanishes in splendour, as we mark.
For there were windows that kept out the beams
Of noontide, or just painted a dim floor
And silent marble with their mighty dreams,
Or half unbosomed raptures of white charms
To cheat the wondering eye; and there a door
Of dazzlement, but like forbidding arms
Not without welcome too, would opening shut
The escaping glory back ere it could give

A gleam, except a fragment fugitive,
 Yet was itself the secret, with a knot
 Which all could read though none by wisdom cut;
 And there rose pillars that uplifted nought,
 But radiant and rejoicing in their lot,
 Like beautiful fond actions idly done
 At hazard and in happiness for none,
 Beyond our censure, above praises wrought
 As in an empty world. The fragrancy
 Of architecture, and the hidden clue
 That lends each fabric its fair hope and line,
 Were there and yielded up the riddling tears
 With exhalations of all poetry
 And mysteries of ancient faiths and fears.
 I feasted upon flowers, and lightly stole
 Its colour from the inward core of things
 Behind the curtain on the wheels and wings
 Which move the systems in their measured track;
 I found the part was bigger than the whole,
 And in the night the Truth that guided back.
 For light and shadow there were one, and led
 Up though by devious circuits to the same
 Supremacy of goal, the faint tops high
 Beyond the footstep's most ecstatic tread
 But yet in spirit unutterably nigh—
 And one the notion and its righteous name.
 I saw the sweet of littleness, the joy
 Past our expression in the cloistered cell,
 Alike the perfume of a passing toy
 And spring whence passion drew its awesome spell.
 For the dumb stone and silent services
 Of woods and waters, as at peace they stood
 In pictured trance, had tender languages
 To ears of trust and souls of maidenhood;
 And in their seasons ministered as much
 As shouting myriads of the troublous town,
 Where overhangs the heaven of iron one frown,
 With the low murmur or the tiny touch
 Which marry us to God by subtlest tie.
 And Nature, as the throbbing heart of man

Doth pause and beat again or it must die,
Betwixt the full performance and its plan
Sleeps, and awakes to work in beauty. Thus
I saw beneath the outwardness of sky
And earth the splendid unreality,
The noteless things and nullities, that bore
No narrow measure of mere Space and Time
And yet possessed a meaning dear to us;
The vision of some far forgotten shore,
Of elder days and in some other clime;
And though they did not bow to every call
Were mingled with the Infinite and All,
And memories of lofty moods, and breath
Of larger moments one with life and death.
The precious trifles, and the infant plays
That nothing are and nothing mean and still
Help us to triumph over armoured ill
And roll the worlds on their predestined ways
Or build up creeds and characters, I saw—
And something less in stars than in the straw
Crushed by a pilgrim heel. The grace that shone
Just for a maddening minute and was gone
Before we grasped it and its jewelled text
Was grander than utilities of gold
That bulked in royal palaces and filled
The minds of people with the glare perplex;
And kin to what was stateliest and old,
Or through the breast of boundless Nature thrilled.
The doing little greatly and for nought
Save the mere bliss of doing it so well,
The flower of stillness and the festival
And knowledge more than being and unbought
By vulgar arts of precept practical,
Abiding in the bourne where secrets dwell;
Laid on me kindly hands, and lured my heart
To seek those circles of green rest apart.
And there among the elements I found
The archetypes of whatso'er we think,
In ecstasy that overflows the brink
This small earth and makes it holy ground;

The love that lives in dying, as the box
 Of alabaster broken for the head
 We honour, which is Christ to us and spread
 With splendour—if no halo orthodox ;
 And silver fountains of most futile tears
 Seen through a tawny cloud of tumbled hair,
 And then a wealth of subtlety and heed
 Lavished upon a leaf to form it fair
 For ever and for ever through the lands ;
 And angels whispering into shell-like ears
 Some word of light to be the saving seed
 Of worlds to come, when dropt by baby lips
 Which babble on through earthquake and eclipse,
 And mould the service of imperial hands ;
 The minor thoughts and dim moralities,
 Unseen, unknown, and yet the life of each
 And all who are uncrowned but rule and teach
 With sceptres of the sweet philosophies.
 I bathed me deep in that most gentle hope
 Which falls as dew and wraps us closely round
 Lest we should spill our music on the ground
 And fail in sin and darkness, or the scent
 Of beautiful rich souls be idly spent
 Before they climbed the summit of the slope.
 But first I laved my sullied mouth and arms
 In the white waters of that Purity
 Which flows from God and is the vital breath
 Of saints that walk with Him, though fearfully,
 In joy, beyond the malices of harms
 Through stillness as of night's delicious death:
 And thus my eyes were opened, and I saw
 The vision of the Blessed One, whose name
 Is Silence and our Comfort, and the law
 Which guards us virgin-wise from shade of shame
 And recreates with charity as wine
 Poured into dumb dead veins, and turns divine.
 But mingling then with masses, or the lone
 Sad little lot of man oppressed by fate,
 Or left to struggle forth disconsolate
 And all forgotten, I did find at length

The wonder of a new immortal strength,
And while unkinged the substance of a throne.
For in the tender policies of trust
And offices of lowliness, but sweet ;
That moved unmarked in regions pale and pent,
Beneath the cloud and through the grey blind dust ;
By daily washing of the beggars' feet,
I had regained the grand Lost Sacrament.

GOD'S LOVE.

It is not only air we breathe,
Who are hung in the awful Space
Where the clouds and the stars enwreath,
And we rest in the Father's face.
But the Infinite love, below, above,
Laps us in its tender arms ;
And as infants we lie, and live and die
Wrapt round from the thorny harms,
For each inspiration is His salvation,
That heedless and blind we draw ;
And the rapture felt is a revelation
Divine, and its goodly law.

It is not only meat we take,
As we merrily dine and drink ;
While our destiny we unmake,
If in grovelling sense we sink.
But the Infinite love, below, above,
Gives all of us daily bread ;
And we fatten and feed, in every need,
Of food on His table spread.
For our answered wishes are God's good dishes
Whereon we in plenty fare,
If they come in guise of sweet flesh or fishes
And attest His boundless care.

THE ONE BEAUTIFUL.

My Beautiful, my Best, my All,
 To whom I dimly grope
 With each ascent, by every fall,
 In the blue heaven of hope.
 Unutterably far, and yet
 Divinely true and near,
 With the deep thunders of the worlds beset
 Though orbèd in a tear.
 Through universes in my dreams
 I toil, I climb for ages
 Which are but passing pages,
 Amid the stars in dazzling streams,
 Amid a host of harms ;
 I wander as a baby blind,
 To wake in blessedness and find
 Myself within Thy arms.
 I feel Thy breath upon my cheek,
 And chastened to my stroking—
 Made exquisitely mild and meek
 Thy face, which I for ever seek
 By altars darkly smoking ;
 I gather to my breast that Grace,
 Which while the majesty of Space
 I prize most when provoking.

I cannot see Thee, yet I gaze
 Right clearly in those Eyes
 So more than human with the haze
 Of passion's purple skies ;
 I cannot touch Thy Hand, but still
 It is not coldly far
 At any hour, and after scorching ill
 It softens the rude scar.
 And sometimes in the happy night,
 In pretty primrose weather,
 We play sweet games together
 Betwixt the shadow and the light ;
 And lowly to me bent

I taste the mercy of Thy Mouth,
Like balmy breezes of the south,
Each kiss a sacrament.
And at the meeting of our lips,
Which is a solemn sainting,
The fire burns to my finger tips
With joy of earthquake and eclipse,
Beyond a poet's painting;
And with Thy gloriousness I mix,
While all my being's bars unfix
In ecstasies past fainting.

My Beautiful, my Best, my One,
My Father, who hast smil'd
Upon this workmanship foredone,
O Thou Eternal Child!
Great Treasure of all Space and Time,
Filling the cosmic throne
Which sends its rays on every creed and clime,
And yet my God alone.
Dear Soul of Sorrow, and the Joy
That sets the planets rolling
And is their curb controlling,
But yet my humblest tool and toy
And closest kith and kin!
I only lose Thee, when I let
This dreadful dower of spirit forget
Its high estate for sin.
And when temptation's spoiling spear
Falls with a sharp surprising,
Then in my deafness Thou dost hear,
Betwixt the trembling faith and fear,
And art my re-arising;
For all the furious furnace heats
Prove in the end Thy bosom beats,
Won if by agonising.

I often seek in Thee some speck
From jealous heed of duty,
As on the columned lily's neck
A hidden flaw in beauty;



But though I strive with utmost cares
 To track a tiny spot,
 And sometimes seem to catch Thee unawares—
 I do discern it not.
 What were a stain to mortals, makes
 For Thee but comely dresses
 And perfect lovelinesses,
 Whereof my blemished life partakes
 And waxes with Thee grand;
 I warm me in the wondrous flame,
 Which thrills and compasses the frame
 Of every sea and land.
 I fancy like me none is quite
 To thee a child as tender,
 If in all suffering washed and white,
 Or fashioned of the Infinite
 And girded with its splendour;
 O Thou to none, however good,
 As to my gentle hardihood,
 Hast given Thy whole surrender.

THE COSMOS.

Why has God clothed with terrible sweet joy
 And awful beauty
 This earth of ours, that is the children's toy
 Yet does its duty?
 For while the cosmic wheels go rolling on
 Machine-wise, mighty,
 They give a Babel or a Babylon
 Or the white wonder of the Parthenon
 And Aphrodite;
 Yea, though they are for ever grinding, grinding
 As grist the planets
 With Johns and Janets,
 Through orbs and individuals winding, winding
 Their systemed cycles, and the centuries pass
 And grow as lightly as the summer grass
 Civilisations
 And populations,

With newer cults and fears and nobler creeds,
Which answer to the pulse of broader needs ;
Yet do they touch the springs of inmost being
Where blessed knowledge is the same as seeing
Beyond all stricture,
And on a common ground of one agreeing
They make a picture.

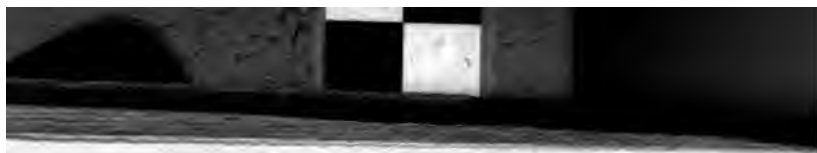
He was not bound to mete a building fair
And glad with glory,
As He hath richly garmented in air
Of blue clerestory
This world and all the universes' eaves
And starry hanging,
That with the æons form and fade as leaves
And fruit and then are gathered up as sheaves
Through shadowed panging ;
He was not forced with kindly tending, tending,
To paint us yellow
Gold and its fellow
The buttercup, and in soft blending, blending,
To mix with subtlest graces, hopes and hues—
A freewill offering and with heavenly clues—
And pour a fragrance
On wild weeds' vagrance,
Or lavish wealth of curves and cunning forms
And fashion comely the rude strife and storms.
They do not help the pistons' measured beating,
Or add a morsel to His furnace heating
By pretty dresses ;
And yet God scatters far, not once repeating,
His lovelinesses.

He might have cast an ugly evil shape
Of clay and granite,
And not have finished even one purple grape
Though He began it ;
He might have framed us just a monstrous mill
With iron forges,
Which manufactured blindly good and ill



Impartially, and left no room for will
In sunless gorges.
He might have thrown His engines' panting, panting,
Down with no sweetness
On our unmeetness,
Without a throb of pleasure's chanting, chanting ;
And scribbled not a bird upon the sky
Nor scattered flower and wing of butterfly
And cushioned mosses
Among our crosses,
That lift us by their charms most gently up
And turn each bud a sacramental cup.
But out of all the many gifts and choices
He in His bounty dealt us singing voices
Beyond small stricture,
And moulded earth that laughs and still rejoices
A perfect picture.





SECTION VI.

The Prisoner of Eternity.

THE PRISONER OF ETERNITY.

God in His lonely Being, God in His awful might,
Hungered at last for fleeing out of excessive Light.
Sole with His solemn greatness high above joy and
grief,
Grim in august sedateness, weary He wished relief.
Cold was the bliss that entered none but His boundless
Life,
Dreadful when all Self-centred, stirred not by any
strife.
Terrible grew the prison made by His perfect lot,
Where not a cloud had risen yet nor one splendid spot.
Vain seemed the endless ages, turning alone for Him
Still the unblotted pages never a tear could dim.
There by His own election sealed in a sacred calm
Shutting out less affection, sadly He sought a balm.
Gaunt was that dread privation touched by no tempest
rude,
Ghastly the condemnation dooming to solitude ;
Starving amid the glory binding Him captive in,
Hearing the eternal story pure from it's fellow sin,
Darkly He drew the fulness round His unruffled Heart
Walled though Divine with dulness, dwelling in peace
apart.
Horrible grew the brightness shared not nor shadowed
yet,
Robbing His one uprightness round with a sun unset ;
Cursed was the lot and fateful—but to be so employed,
Crushing Him down and hateful all because unalloyed.
Therefore He oped the portal letting His grandeur out,
Making the creature mortal wrapt with His Life about;

Tired of the ages endless, calm that no ripple broke,
 He from His summits friendless thus in the silence
 spoke :

* * * *

“ It is a burden I can hardly bear,
 A crown My Head is weary now to wear,
 Which never from a set beginning rose
 And never may find refuge in a close,
 Though centuries on centuries roll by—
 This dreadful boon of all Eternity.
 No time existed, when I was not still
 The same One God with one same iron will
 Supreme, resistless, in unchanging might
 And loneliness of intolerable Light,
 At once My dungeon and My glorious dress
 Of bliss profound and beauty merciless,
 Augustly perfect and serenely sole
 The Life of life and yet Myself the Whole.
 From everlasting I was just the same,
 Incomprehensible, the fount and frame
 Of all alike, the Last as well as First
 Self-centred and sufficient with no thirst
 From lack of any good, above the need
 That wrecks itself in poetries of deed,
 Beyond the pulse of passion in My store
 Of absolute abundance, never more
 Endowed than I could ask for, never less,
 In awful joy of uncompanionedness.
 This is My trouble, that I cannot cease
 From happiness and unabated peace
 Without a bar or pause or petty cloud,
 In the great shining Home that is My shroud ;
 I fret against the tyranny of years
 So fruitful with no equipoise of fears,
 No background and no shadow and no sky
 To break the prison of Eternity.
 The overflowing cup, the boundless range
 Of rest and gladness with no chime of change,
 Oppress Me in My solitary throne
 With the fixed measure of their monotone ;

I am a burden to Myself, though bright
And beautiful is all in sound and sight,
Yet incomplete in its completeness orb'd
Which has each gift and every grace absorbed,
And turned to bondage from the sheer excess
Of joy and peace and perfect holiness ;
And, from this dreary plenitude of Power,
I crave for want within My fearful dower.
The need of nothing is the sorest need
To One who is the blossom and the seed
Of universal Being, and at call
Has whatsoe'er He seeks since He is All,
And cannot gain what He does not possess
In the broad circle of that Blessedness
Where æons are the only hours that strike,
The Centre and Circumference alike
Of the grand Sum, the Fountainhead and stream
The Light of light, the Dreamer and the dream.
Beneath the weight and wonder of the joy
That has no limit and no kind alloy,
I pine for mortal change, if but a breath,
And the sweet mercy of a moment's death.
But yet I must pursue the pathway trod,
For I may nowise other be than God
Or step outside Myself ; for if I did
What My own law and destiny forbid,
And should exceed the uttermost dim bond
That binds Me in, it were Myself beyond ;
And this My glory also is My curse,
I am the Slave of My own universe
Who must for ever and for ever be
Author and outcome both, and cannot flee
From any part or lot that is not Mine,
Enchained in this imprisonment Divine.
I am resolved to put forth fresher bloom
And make of Mine some new adaptive doom
With fair creations in an ordered sphere,
Where man and leaf shall flourish and turn sere
By generations' gradual rise and fall,
And birth succeeded by the solemn pall,

With kind relief for every soul at length,
 In intermissions of surcease and strength ;
 That in their languors of allotted sleep
 I too may drink the cup of poppies deep,
 And reap in breaking of each human tie
 A reflex rest, though God can never die."

* * * *

God in His glorious prison shadowless, where no shape
 Mortal had yet arisen, hungered for some escape.
 Then on the unseen forges, moulding His mighty plan
 Hidden in mountain gorges, God to create began ;
 Took of His own great Being beautiful, pure and white,
 Touched it with inward seeing wonderful, infinite ;
 Rifled His own sweet Bosom even of perfect joy,
 Mingled the noontide blossom then with the night's
 alloy ;
 Gave with a father's blessing bright as the spring's
 young morn
 Other and sharp caressing felt in the flower-hid thorn ;
 Mixed with the love for leaven sorrow to work as ban,
 Fear but with hope as heaven, making His fellow man.
 God from His weary splendour high on the mountain
 cup,
 Bade by His Self-surrender image of Him start up ;
 Clothed him with His own thunder garb, while the
 sacred fire
 Leapt at His Will and under kindled divine desire ;
 Fashioned him fair with beauty hugging the beast as
 foil,
 Sowed in him seed of duty blooming in blessed toil ;
 Formed in His likeness kneading godhead and earthly
 dust,
 Building him broad and leading on through ascents of
 trust ;
 Poured in his every motion's music a kingly grace,
 Crowning him with devotion's dew on the upturned
 face ;
 Added to His dear creature all the Immortal can,
 Passion and angel feature, making His plaything man.

God in His changeless bounding breathed in His
scapegoat breath,
Fenced in by frail surrounding rich with the dower of
death ;
Set him on earth as victim decked with the roses'
chains,
Chosen but to afflict him thus with vicarious pains :
Turned him adrift and loaded still with a mortal freight
Weakness to ruin goaded, easing His own sad weight ;
Tempted him mocked with blindness set in his very
law ;
Scourged but in helpful kindness till he in suffering saw :
Starved him when madly driven out from a plenteous
place,
Stayed him in deserts riven sore with exceeding Grace ;
Framed him through stormy trials meant as His
winnowing fan
Stronger by stern denials, making His servant man.
God in eternal soleness seeking a salve and kin,
Out of His awful wholeness shuddering looked on Sin ;
Gazed on the evil shadow dogging His tool and toy,
Blight on the greenest meadow, blot in the gentlest joy ;
Bathed in the lava glowing flesh He had softly knit,
Turned to the tempest blowing nerves that were all
unfit ;
Hedged the poor lot with thistles, fed it on stones
for bread,
Harrowed with iron bristles life like a silken thread ;
Scattered in Love the sorrow He never yet might share,
Though He would gladly borrow ills that His creature
bare ;
While He bestowed the resting change and a mortal
plan
Grudged for His own investing—making His failure
man.

* * * *

“ Lo, it is done, and yet I hunger more
Within the boundless riches of My store
Which is Infinity, for kindly rest
To drop in drowsy might upon this Breast,

Which of the oceans that around Me lie
Seeks for some pity that will let it die,
And cannot gain the portion of the brute,
To live its little hour and then be mute.
I have beheld the ages passing by
Beneath My footstool, and new earth and sky
Made and unmade and giving place to fresh,
Which each dissolved in turn its cunning mesh
For others and still others as they came
From the one womb of whirling cloud and flame,
To pass through pomp of universal life
By growing stages of all fruitful strife,
And play with pistons of a cosmic breath
Ere dwindling down to universal death;
And then once more from the great funeral
Of Night supreme and aboriginal
Resume on larger scales the mystic dance
And ever young and ever old romance
Of suns and moons and systems in their bound,
Waxing and wanning as they circled round,
And brake like foam of phosphorescent wave
On Me their Architekton and their grave.
Millennia on millennia now have gone,
While constellations set that proudly shone
For times and seasons past all earthly tale,
And world on world has brightened and turned pale
Though I abode and never might grow less
In the grim circuit of Almightyness.
Ah, I have seen in rhythmic glare and gloom
Strange fates and banqueted on death and doom
Myself unmoved, and in this vast decay
Yet could not from My dungeon flee away,
And this Self-wrought and Self-determined lot
Which shuts Me in to splendour without spot
And immortality. For in the range
Of countless forms I only could not change,
Or briefly darken to a gracious close
And snatch one minute of denied repose,
While all things else knew their appointed end
And found in death a saviour and a friend,

Descending into silence and the dust
To rise again with more refulgent trust.
But wherefore could not I, who needed most
Some respite, for a while desert My post
And slumber in the tomb a certain space
For resurrections of Diviner Grace ?
Death rolled around a multitudinous sea
Of shapeless shadows, but refused My plea
For mercy while its surges came and went
And gulfed the kingdom and the continent,
With wan eclipse so infinitely sweet
And bathed in furious impotence My feet,
That might not yield to its corroding wrath
And still paced on their dreary millround path
Embraced by Me and yet abhorred as well,
The Heaven that in its changelessness is hell.
For I alone mid all My creature things
That ebb and flow in ceaseless perishings
And re-appearings, I alone endure
The shock and shelter of the end secure
And soft oblivion which to these may give
Fair funeral for a time while I must live.
I am most weary of the unruffled calm
That brings to Me no compensating balm
In blank persistence, while around, below,
Creation marches to its overthrow
Through superstructions rising tier on tier
From mysteries of bridal to the bier ;
And I who thirst to have a kindred share
With these in sweetness of a common care
And draw delicious streams of rapture thence,
Am crushed beneath My own magnificence
Which still abides the same, no less, no more,
Though Death beats on Me as on iron shore
Beat the white breakers that have beat since Time
First woke the madness of their measured chime.
O if I could to nothing now resolve
My Being, who for others may evolve
A portion and a bound and then unmake
The vast machines that at My Will awake,

I were most willing to achieve that rest
Which lies like music on the maiden's breast
Or rocks the roosting bird upon the Deep,
And though not death is its own fellow sleep.
But yet for Me in all uncharted Space
No death can ever find a dwelling-place,
Nor its dear shadow ; I go living on,
Without the pity dealt to Babylon
Or universal Rome, whose swords are rust,
Whose palaces are but a pinch of dust.
I feed, I fill the myriad worlds that pass
Like clouds a moment mirrored on the grass,
And richly grant in happiness or grief
The destined lots and lines of fixed relief ;
Which I may nowise take Myself, who move
Amid the pleasures that I cannot prove,
And shall for ever range beneath this dome
Of splendid sorrow with no final home,
While system after system billows by,
The hopeless Prisoner of Eternity."

THE BOOK OF BANE.

*Stand upon Ebal, Lord, baring the judgment sword ;
Curse with avenging need, curse all the powers of Greed.*

*This is the Book of Bane---
Hear what the Heavens ordain,
Hear the unaltered curse
Cast on the Spoiler's purse
Builted of crime and greed,
Growing by lives that bleed
Under the sweater's pall
Woven of bitter need ;
Hear the abiding curse
Cast on his house and all,
Sparing not babe or nurse,
Blasting them in one fall
Mingled of mire and pain—
This is the Book of Bane.*

This is the Book of Bane—
Cursèd be he in gain
Wrung from his drudges' throes
Out of their daily woes ;
Cursèd his cruel breath
Fed by their living death,
Scorning the One who died
Jesus of Nazareth ;
His be the victims' throes
Heard not howe'er they cried,
His be the inward foes
Gnawing a nature wried,
Horror and leper stain—
This is the Book of Bane.

This is the Book of Bane,
Making his toil in vain ;
Cursèd be he in store
Gathering hourly more
But for the spendthrift's hand,
But for the canker's brand,
But for the mocker's part,
Heaped as a tower of sand ;
Cursèd be he in store,
Cursèd his haunted heart
Bearing what others bore
Crushed by his evil art,
Bearing their pangs again—
This is the Book of Bane.

This is the Book of Bane—
Hear what the Heavens ordain ;
Cursèd be he with gloom
Clouding the bridal room,
Laid on his dying life,
Hung with the judgment knife
Over his path in shame,
Breeding the rot of strife ;
Cursèd be he with gloom,
Shadow of fear and flame
Shed by the creeping doom ;

Cursèd his kin and name,
Bound in one blighting chain—
This is the Book of Bane.

*Stand upon Ebal, Lord, baring the judgment sword ;
Curse with avenging need, curse all the powers of Greed.*

THE BOOK OF BLESSING.

*Stand on Gerizim, Lord, sheathing the judgment sword ;
Bless all abounding love, bless from Thy founts above.*

This is the Book of Blessing—
Hear what the Heavens to thee,
Lover of man decree
Now amid passions pressing,
Laughter and love's caressing,
Gifts that in grace agree ;
Honour and praise they give,
Gladness whereby we live,
Kingdom of hope and calm
Fixed and not fugitive ;
Always a shading palm
Cool when the heat is pressing,
Always the breath of balm—
This is the Book of Blessing.

This is the Book of Blessing—
Light in the darkest home,
Light from the sacred tome
Shed by white souls' confessing,
Kindled by no vain guessing
Under a godless dome ;
Blessèd be thou in toil
Garnering wheat and oil,
Blessèd in body and mind
Rich with a golden spoil,
Blessèd to loose or bind
Others who come confessing
And without thee were blind—
This is the Book of Blessing.

This is the Book of Blessing—
Laded with wealth for thee,
Helper of hearts that flee
Straight to thy strong redressing,
Sick with their sore distressing,
Safe from the realms unfree ;
Blessed be thou in price
Paid for the pleasant spice
Poured by thy service sweet,
Blessèd in sacrifice
Offered at those pure feet
Tribute for thy redressing,
Recompense not unmeet—
This is the Book of Blessing.

This is the Book of Blessing—
Hear what the Heavens assign
Out of their bliss benign
Over our dim transgressing,
Meed beyond man's assessing,
Dew of a strength Divine ;
Blessèd be thou to heal
Brothers who have no weal,
Saving the friendly tomb
Yawning to seize and seal ;
Blessèd in fruitful womb,
And above all transgressing
Life in its honey-comb—
This is the Book of Blessing.

*Stand on Gerizim, Lord, sheathing the judgment sword ;
Bless all abounding love, bless from thy founts above.*

AN EASTER HYMN.

The voice of resurrection thou,
Poised on that purple stair
Which carries stars upon its brow,
Bright angel of the air ;
O bathed in beauty and in Heaven
Which thou hast ever trod,

Thy music has a holy leaven
And mingles all with God ;
To thee no riddle can be dark,
Sweet tenant of the sky
Which is thy dwelling-place, thou spark
Of true Divinity.

O lovely voice, O lonely Bird,
Thou drawest us on high
Till every pulse with joy is stirr'd
And Paradise brought nigh ;
The chambers of the rolling Space
Are redolent of thee,
As though our common Father's face
Undazzled thou dost see,
And waft the fragrance of His Love
Upon that wondrous wing
In silver spray from founts above,
O thou eternal Spring.

Thy song disperses each gray doubt
Forbidding hope to fly,
Till hearts of prison broaden out
Into infinity ;
And faded faiths that had been dead
In cold misgivings' gloom,
Awaked by thee lift up their head
Again and bud and bloom ;
Thou walkest on the waves of sound
And glory is thy dress,
Thy life is light without a bound,
Dear everlastingness.

Thy message drops as soft as dew
And is immortal youth,
For ever old, for ever new,
For ever one with Truth ;
And though thy nest is but a clod
Amid the humble stones,
The breath of the most awful God
Breathes through thy burning tones ;

The promise of all worlds to thee
For us in mercy came,
Earth and the better earth to be,
O thou incarnate flame.

HOW BEAUTIFUL.

O God, beyond all praises' breath,
How beautiful Thou art !
How marvellous in life and death,
And haunting to the heart !

I cannot hide away from Thee
Nor would I if I might,
For into darkness did I flee
Thou wert the shadowed night.

Thine hour-glass is the sandy shore,
Thy cruse the dreadful deep,
Thy footsteps pace for evermore
The silent heaven of sleep.

The lily with its virgin pose
Is fragrant with Thy grace,
And reverence sees in every rose
A glimmer of Thy Face.

A broken mirror one may be,
The midnight and the morn,
But yet a mirror each of Thee—
The blossom and the thorn.

The tree that takes a frosty hue
Beneath the stormy strife,
Is something more, it doth endue
A fragment of Thy Life.

The bridal chamber reddening up,
To meet the fruitful kiss
Of honey-bee in honey-cup,
Is blushing with Thy Bliss.

I mark the waving of Thy dress,
Which covers all the globe,
Alike in weeds' unprettiness
And poppies' scarlet robe.

The leaf that lisps its tender tale
Draws music from Thy Voice,
Which thunders in the shouting gale
When winds and waves rejoice.

The thought to cradle me is Thine
And rocks the sleeping land,
And in the fray from Thee Divine
I touch Thy human Hand.

The thirsty grass that gathers rain
Of Thy free table sips,
And in the nettle's blessed pain
I only feel Thy Lips.

The gold dust on the insect's wings,
The moment of the mite,
Though both are as a jarring string,
With Thee are infinite.

O God, my wonder cannot guess
What half Thy grandeurs be,
Thou universal Loveliness
Who findest room for *me*.

MY GARDEN.

Ye beeches fashioned by the storms,
Ye solemn oaks
So gnarled and twisted into demon forms
Through which the sunlight soaks
In summer, and ye guardian pines
That build a barrier to the northern blast,
Earth-fast,
Whereby it scarce can find an entry —
That stand in stubborn lines,

Like God's great peace as sentry ;
Ye are my kin
And playmates, and one common shadow falls
As of a common sin
On me and on your sheltering walls.
Ye are my friends,
And ye and I
Grow still beneath the same blue equal sky,
And to no different ends
Put forth the shoots of tender trust
From dust
And darkness, into the sweet air
To clothe and make our bodies fair
And something better than the clod,
And feed the heart
Of man and life so close apart,
Not for ourselves but God.
We wrestle
Both with the winter winds and catch
And cling unto each other,
Or softly sleep and dimly nestle
And each as with a brother
Under the twilight in the cool and calm,
And breathe in balm
That silence cannot smother
One evening psalm
Unto the same dear Heaven that bows
In blessing on our languid brows.
Ye are my teachers too,
Wise with the hoary lessons of the past
Which prophets vainly woo
Until to you as children sent at last.
I learn
From yellow pages of your lichen'd boles,
The path of pilgrim souls ;
What sufferings earn
By cross and loss and bitter bindings,
And daily losings that are findings ;
What sin,
Which makes us all akin,

Has wrought with cruel moulding
And serpentine enfolding,
By which we thrive
Or do decay
And pass away
To rise renewed once more and re-alive ;
What love,
The general pulse, the general law
Of crooning dove
And snowy maid
With love's new light and living awe
Impassioned and afraid,
Has turned to music and to song
That rolls the happy world along.
I read
And reap from your dear mossy books
The elemental forces of the mind,
That knead
And lead
From dusky nooks
Sweet natures blind,
To studies of the laughing brooks
And wisdom of the travelled wind.
Ye are my house,
My clothing and my bread,
Shared with the flitting moth and mouse
And song-birds overhead.
Yes, in your greenery of gloom
So soft and spacious,
So glad and gracious,
I with my cares and fantasies find room
For all their features,
And blighted feelings bloom
That hid like wounded creatures
In shadow, and again take shape
And in their freedom from their wounds escape.
The manna of your dew and scent
Is heavenly food
For every mood,
And fulness of a deep content.

But in the evening comes the Master down
To see His garden, as of old,
And then each tree in dainty gown
Before Him bends its green and gold
And lays its crown
Of praise and wonder,
And murmurs from the leaf-hid mould
That He may pass in peace thereunder.
And I,
Who see Him not but only guess
That He is beautiful and nigh
And comes to bless,
Yet mix my loyal sigh
With yours and melt into His Loveliness.
Dear Trees,
My sole companions, my sole friends,
When life has settled on the lees
That nothing mends,
In you I find
The sympathy I seek
Soft on my cheek
And medicine to my troubled mind ;
There is a sanctuary in your sod
That feels no Fall,
And safe within your arms that call
I walk with God.
And ye, my flowers,
In architected piles and orders
Obedient to your ivied borders,
That weave me bowers
Of pink and purple, white and red,
Spilled over every spacious bed
In broad profusion—
Ye are dear
In all the depths of your Divine seclusion,
From russet stem to starry tear
That glistens
High on some blue or crimson cup,
And gathers up
Deep in its tiny cell

Serenely curl'd
As in a fairy crucible
The grace and glory of the whole wide world.
Ye maiden flowers in pretty frocks,
My lady-smocks
And goldylocks,
I know
The passion and the glow
That through your veins with summer flow ;
Ye hollyhocks,
My sentinels, that stand on guard
And brave the tempests when they blow,
However scarr'd ;
I feel the spirit in my measure
That breathes through *you* and is life's treasure
And gives the sadness
With the gladness
Bound up in one white flame of pleasure,
And drinks of mirth and drinks of madness.
While far below you at your feet
Upon the misty plain
The murmurous city—street on street
Stands out a yellow stain.
But all its spires
And splendid towers
With all enchantments of the olden hours,
That burnt like fires
Their memoried scrawls
On scarpèd walls,
Are not to me one half as fair
As lightest air
That whispers round your fairy home,
Or magic sun's
Bright beam that runs
From root to petal
And makes each bloom a dazzling dome
Of precious metal.
For ye have suffering souls like mine
And are Divine,
And your Divinity

Breaks out in scarlet blushes,
Beneath the butterfly ;
And in a verdure of intense virginity
Riots and rushes
Beyond the haze
That bounds my gaze
Out in the awful ocean of Infinity ;
And in blue weather
Upon that shore,
We play together
And garner little sheaves of lore,
Or drink of the great common store
Tied by one tether
Of living love,
Which holds when lesser bonds go by
And links the gardener and his lush foxglove
One with each other and Eternity.
And O innumerable bees,
That haunt my flowers and trees
And chant your chimes
Among the limes,
And take the honey
Your own as well as mine,
To make me wine
Of joy that is not bought with money ;
Throughout the times of history hums
The drowsy music of your drums,
A ceaseless roll
That murmurs all the ages round
And all their riper sweetness sums,
Upon the ever-lengthening scroll
Of happy sound,
When thunder claps of war that toll
To ruin and to death are drown'd.
O garden bright
With borrowed light,
Reflected still from Eden's bowers
And watered with its shining showers,
Thy bosom vernal
Or summer-clad

With trees and flowers and emerald sod,
Is but a shadow of the eternal
Sweet Paradise so green and glad,
Wherein hereafter I shall walk with God.

— — —
“NOT A SPARROW,” ETC.

Not a sparrow
Ever to the earth can fall,
But the Father hears its call ;
Not an arrow
Of a prayer is shot on high,
But that wondrous Love is nigh
Which doth count each hair and all.

Not a blossom
Of a lily may be torn,
But the Father feels the thorn ;
Not a bosom
May be stabbed with cruel fear,
But His Mercy holds the spear,
Who Himself to pain was born.

Not a bleating
Of a lamb upon the wind,
But the Father makes this kind ;
Not a heating
Of a furnace comes with woe,
But He first each fiery throe
Tasted ere we walked behind.

Not a shadow
Drops without the Father's will,
Who takes thought of oxen still ;
Not a meadow
Cries with fading flowers for rain,
But He knows the weary chain
And creation's lightest ill.

Not one little
Tear or trouble is so small,
But the Father notes its thrall ;

Not a tittle
Of a story no one hears,
But is music to His ears
Who is as our Temple wall.

Not the straying
Of a baby's feet in night,
But the Father metes some light ;
Not the playing
Of a butterfly or bee,
But His eyes in pity see
Who is all our sun and sight.

Not a burden
Presses on the back of care,
Which the Father does not share ;
Not a guerdon,
If of gladness or of grief,
Wherein He is not the chief
Who our sins and sorrows bare.

Not a stable
Or a wild where cattle feed
But the Father helps their need
Not a table
For His creatures' meal is spread,
But that Presence is their Bread
Which alone is Food indeed.

Not a sparrow
Waves in want its tiny wings,
But unto the Father clings ;
Not a narrow
Nest or portion lowly laid,
But He giveth each His aid
Who is Father of all things.

“CONSIDER THE LILIES.”

Look at the lilies
How they grow in perfect form and face,
And prove what excellence that Will is
Which gave such faultless grace ;
They toil not as we must, dear brothers,
And never need they spin
Their weary lives away like others,
And then new tasks begin ;
For beauty
Is their simple duty,
To feed on sun and air
Or bend their lips to every bidder
And hourly wax more fair—
And hourly wax more fair.
Sweet Heart, the World is a sweet bidder,
And thou dost daily bloom and grow
As fair as lilies are, but O
“Consider.”

Look at the lilies,
How they grow in poetry of power
And praise therewith the One whose Will is
That everything should flower ;
They toil not, yet no king of story
Was ever clothed like them,
In garb of fire and dew and glory,
And spotless diadem ;
For pleasing
Saddened eyes and easing
The troubled soul of man
And smiling on the boldest bidder,
Is their appointed plan—
Is their appointed plan.
Sweet Heart, the flesh is a sweet bidder
And vain would break thy virgin vow
Which married thee to Christ, but now
“Consider.”



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Look at the lilies
How they grow in seemliness of shape,
And magnify the Hand whose Will is
 A love that none escape ;
They toil not, yet their robes are scarlet,
 And nowise need they spin
Those pretty frocks at night so starlit
 That are to light akin ;
 For shining
 Only and inclining
 Their wealth to those that woo,
And breathing honey on each bidder
 Is all the work they do—
 Is all the work they do.
Sweet Heart, the Devil is a bidder,
And daily thou dost send more far
The fragrance of thy life, but ah !
 "Consider."

Look at the lilies,
How they grow in purity of dress
And bear the Teacher's law whose Will is
 A life of holiness ;
They toil not on our dreary stages,
 They till no grudging ground
Which gives them all, and not for wages,
 And hold one happy round ;
 For serving
 Others, and not swerving
 From what God first ordained,
Or paying tithe to every bidder,
 Is in their lot engrained—
 Is in their lot engrained.
Sweet Heart, thy sin is a sweet bidder,
With soft delights to lay thee low
And dash thy lily bloom, but O
 "Consider."

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS.

"The Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church."

Lo, among the mean and meagre structures of a sterile
art

Came the Architekton, eager with the measures in His
heart

Of a great and goodly Building which would last and
laugh and shine

In a glory for no gilding to make meeter or refine.

And He spake—

"Come, bring me metal
Purer than the white snow-flake,

Gold as yellow as the petal
Of the buttercup's gold breast ;

And of treasure at My pleasure all your silver hoards
and best ;

And of timber and of stone,

Whatever may become my throne."

So they brought Him of their rarest riches what their
hands had won,

Precious gems, and marbles fairest, freshly quarried,
grandly done,

And they laid them as a present at the Architekton's
feet,

Till the whole wide land seemed pleasant with their
comeliness and sweet.

And they spake—

"Behold the beauty,
As of virgin flowers that brake

Out beneath the steps of duty

When it trod the martyr's path,

And the blessing of caressing earth redeemed the
murderer's wrath ;

Here is masonry, and store

Of choicest things—what would'st thou more ? "

Then the Architekton graciously accepted all their gifts,
For the Building must be spaciously upreared and with
no rifts



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And no blank of imperfection in its splendour full and
soft,
Springing like the resurrection of a ransomed world
aloft.

But He spake

Again in weeping—

“Ah, the House I cannot make

Yet without a bitter steeping

Of its bases in the flood,

Which is given by the riven hearts of servants and their
blood;

Ye have lent what labour hives,

But now I want your noblest lives.”

So the purest of the preachers in the silence and the
shade

With the wisest among teachers, as the awful summons
bade,

Flocked and with no thought of trembling in the greatest
or the least

To the hallowed ground assembling as unto a marriage
feast.

And they spake—

“We come, O Master,

Gladly, quickly, for Thy sake,

Proud to bear the last disaster

As delight and due to Thee,

Who hast finely and divinely fashioned us so strong and
free;

We obey Thy solemn call,

And here we lay ourselves and all.”

Then the Architekton raising high the body of His
thought

Built the saintly souls, that praising Him waxed lovelier
as He wrought

Them and their supreme oblation to a texture strange
and new

From a perfect consecration, in His Will which outward
grew.

And He spake—

“ My children dying
Thus with dearer charms awake
And in forms that are not flying,
Merged within a broader ken ;
For the nations’ firm foundations are the holy lives of
men ;
And for every conquering creed,
The blood must be the vital seed.”

So the Building with that leaven and the red baptismal
dew
Leapt like fire abroad to Heaven and on wings of
wonder flew,
Waxing brighter with the ages, and illuming dark and
dearth
With the glory of its pages, till it overshadowed earth.
But none spake
Good words or pondered,
Though they greedy were to take
All the priceless jewels squandered
On their bases of all bliss ;
Though they cared not, and they spared not hearts
that only bled for this ;
And none heeded, or would know
Who were the martyrs laid below.

THE GREAT SILENCE (FRAGMENT).

“ *There was Silence in Heaven.*”—Rev. viii. 1.

The great white Throne was planted, and the God
Whose robe is thunder and who bears the rod
Of judgment with the books of life and ban,
Who is our Brother and our Fellow man,
Sat thereupon ; and men were gathered round,
Nations on nations, worlds beyond a bound,
Innumerable kingdoms and the climes
Of peoples from all places and all times
Since earth began, and to the utmost end
To which creations from their cradles tend

Through birth and fruitful dying. There the Throne
Was fixed, and on it set the Judge alone
In dreadful might and majesty, though not
From wrath and ruin that had been a blot
Or violence and fear, but in the awe
Of unimagined love that was His law.
And yet the terror of the Love so pure
Smote like a fire which no one could endure
With its great wealth of holiness. But He,
Who looked throughout all time that was to be
And had been, spoke no single word of good
Or evil; while in hush beneath Him stood
The generations out of every stage
Of earth and open as a printed page;
As, in the silence like a brooding dove,
He weighed them in the balances of Love.

L' HOMME MACHINE.—EGO, EGO ANIMUS.

L'homme machine.

Freewill is nothing but a poet's dream,
Or fraud of paid professors
Who sit as false assessors
And hope with straws to stay the cosmic stream;
But still the engine's piston and the wheels
Hold on their ceaseless mission,
And life by bud or fission
Or cell and spore its varied thread unreels;
There is no God, I just go blankly on
And do, as I am driven
By the first impulse given,
Just what I must, a blind automaton.

Ego, ego animus.

This heart is soaked in sunrise, and the Spring
For ever keeps it vernal,
And all the great Eternal
Shines through with dreadful overshadowing;

I cannot flee from the pursuing God
Who is in my own bosom,
And makes it fruit and blossom
As He can clothe the barest judgment rod ;
I will not hide my soul in sordid pelf
Or place of earthly leaven,
I seek my kindred Heaven,
I know the awful Maker is Myself.

L'homme machine.

I am content to go yet grinding out
The daily task and measure
Of common grief or pleasure,
I feel no deathless pulse nor glorious doubt ;
The universal tide flows through me still
From the same dim dumb sources,
And I obey the Forces
Which in me wreak their unknown unloved will ;
There is no future and no fairer scene
In higher worlds and hidden,
I live as we are bidden,
I die a broken and ungeared machine.

Ego, ego animus.

In this broad world I have a final voice,
And cherish the true vision,
While with a sharp decision
I cut the darkest nodes by God-like choice ;
I feel the stirring of strange wings and powers
With wells that bubble over,
And bright as light on clover
A promise vaster than old Babel's towers ;
I am no clod resolved at last to dust,
I am no pinch of matter
To live an hour and chatter,
But spirit splendid though in wrack and rust.

L'homme machine.

I am but the poor product of the sum
Of many forms and factors,
Amid a thousand actors

That dance to ruin with the fife and drum ;
I may not gain the profit which I plan,
 When enemies of iron
 In multitudes environ,
I only reap the gleanings as I can ;
I am a vessel if of clay or gold,
 Framed in a common fashion
 And filled with froth of passion
That shall not ever pass its crumbling mould.

Ego, ego animus.

I love and feel the drawing of the tie,
 Which through all time and weather
 Joins heart to heart together,
I love and so I never now can die ;
I think but thoughts the Father's breath inspires,
 And know the farthest fancies
 Of my most fond romances
Are but the echo of His grand desires ;
I am because He is and He is good
 And in me manifested,
 As God the Woman-breasted,
The Man incarnate—in all understood.

SPLENDIDA SILENTIA.

I.

A woman came to Him, no Israelite,
And poured the passion of her infinite
Sweet sorrow trembling into unshed tears
Of sunrise in the Christ's averted ears.
She cried for mercy on herself ; for one
With her the daughter was, who lay undone
And sorely tost, and tortured by the pain
Of pressing evil with its awful chain.
And still each mother's voice that rises up,
To spill its anguished overflowing cup
In quest of pity from the brazen sky,
Bears all the impress of her agony.
She spoke in vain ; as from a stony wall
Beat back the echo of her idle call

And seemed to find no kindly place or part
Of home within that universal Heart,
Which had no room for her lone bitter cry
In its most gentle hospitality.
For never word said He, whose word was life,
To stay the fever of her inward strife,
Which with its tumult tore the mother's breast
And made it one sad sea of wild unrest.
But in the cloud of splendid silence lay,
The lightning Love that yet turned night to day.

II.

Again He met a king the KING uncrowned
Himself, and saw the ribald band around
That mocked him with the menaces of hate,
As futile blasts besiege a palace gate
Unopened and unheeded; armed men
Dealt gibes like sword-cuts; and to Herod's ken
Came back in crimson mist the prophet breath
Of the great Baptist still more great in death,
With the dark record rolling out its map
And words of judgment each a thunder-clap—
Till he remembered. And that figure stood,
Withdrawn from him by the whole heaven of good,
And sadly gazed in his confounded face
In dumb rebuke and all unearthly grace,
While grim about Him seethed the baffled wrath
Of foes disarmed that could not dim His path
To the sublime and certain end. The glare
Of kingly pomp to His world-lifting care
Seemed but the bauble of a fleeting hour,
A thing of shame, the scarlet poppy flower,
And faded as He looked. Earth passed Him by,
Whose Heart held commune with eternity.
Time was a dream, and mean the mighty sword
Against the splendid silence of the Lord.

III.

Once more before the judge his Judge supreme
He stood in solitary woe extreme,
And heard the cruel jests and bare the scorn



Of purple robe and the unregal thorn
And mimic pomp and bowing head and reed
That was His only staff in utter need.
The clash of arms went up, fierce lips did raise
Rude shouts of homage that were yet not praise,
And added greater glory to that lot
Which could not take the semblance of a spot,
And were but witness to His rightful throne
Whereon He judged them all and sat alone.
He saw the wolfish eyes so red with lust
That longed to stamp His kingdom in the dust,
And blast the fair beginnings of new time
With blot of black inexpiable crime.
Again and yet again with flash of steel
And sullen grinding of the iron heel
The question rang, the challenge and the cry
Of doubt or hate that clamoured for reply
But fell as empty sounds upon His ear,
To wake no answer of reproach or fear.
He wrapt His soul from every storm and stress,
In splendid silence like a royal dress.

IV.

And yet, when we fling foolish prayers on high,
He answers not in turn, He comes not nigh,
But draws the veil around Him closer still
Through which we guess but fragments of His will
And gather wisdom from the unvoiced speech.
O if in haste or passion men beseech
Forbidden gifts that were no gain, no joys,
But shining shadows or delusive toys,
His choicest blessing and our chiefest boon
Is the response that sleeps and wakes not soon
Or not at all. He talks between the strains
Of melody and rhythmic beats of pains,
More than in these. And when a fateful gloom
Encircles us and visions dark as doom
Pursue our steps, and with sealed lips of scorn
The mute skies bear no message with the morn
Or evening, and we hark and are afraid—
It is His sentence awful if unsaid.

And though He is the Word and utters loud
 His trumpet warnings from behind no shroud,
 Yet speaks He plainest when no sound is heard
 And in the stillness He is most the Word,
 Who loves all notes and speaks all languages
 But dwells among the Splendid Silences.

ECCLESIAE SEMEN.

[1895, CHINA.]

“The blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church.”

Fire not a volley,
 Strike not a blow
 Now for the martyrs! Warfare is folly,
 Blood may not flow;
 Let not the banner
 Calling to strife
 Wave for the Blessèd, who in Christ's manner
 Offered their life;
 Let not in thunder
 Echo a shot
 Over the harvest red with the plunder,
 Shaming their lot.

This be their beauty,
 This be their fame
 Fighting for God, that death was their duty
 Done without blame;
 This be their merit
 Down through the years,
 Leaving a richer world to inherit,
 Washed with their tears;
 This be their glory
 Far above price,
 Witnessing truly, telling the story—
 Love's sacrifice.
 Here the requiting
 Vengeance they ask,

Grace of forgiving wrongs beyond righting—
 God's precious task ;
 Here for the blindness
 Lost in the dark
Hope's retribution, hope's human kindness
 Bringing the Ark ;
 Here is the paying
 Meet for such debt,
More of our praises, more of our praying,
 More giving yet.

 Leave all the sentence,
 Not to mere man,
Only to Him who granting repentance
 Sees the whole plan ;
 Leave all the madness,
 Murder and need
Only to Him who ever in sadness
 Soweth the seed ;
 Leave the dear Martyrs—
 Breaking hard sod
Thus by their dying, winning us charters—
 Safely with God.

REGAINED IN GOD.

Dear God, it seems so passing strange, I should presume
 to be
Partaker of Thy bounteous change and its o'er brimming
 sea ;
And take from Thee for every hour the riches I love
 best,
A world, a woman, or a flower a moment on the breast ;
And clothe me from Thy wardrobe large beneath the
 blessed sky,
Or toy with pebbles on the marge of old Eternity ;
And at Thy common table feed on beauty, and rare food
That satisfies each selfish need and most imperious
 mood ;

And drink of fountains pure and bright which at Thy
 footsteps play,
Or leap in glory from the night of Thy exceeding day ;
And yet give less than nothing back to Thee Who givest
 all,
Save just the refuse and the wrack of some half-
 sorrowed fall.

Dear God, it never can be right or justly dared and done
To warm my life in boundless Light and offer to Thee
 none ;

I were the meanest basest thing, upon Thy wealth to
 draw

And mix it with a muddy spring or serve a lower law ;
I am not worthy of the name that reckons me as man,
To follow my own shade and shame and use Thy
 nobler plan.

O if I breathe this vital air and bask in heaven's blue
 rift,

Or gather bloom of all things fair—let me confess Thy
 gift.

The sweetness and the joy that flow through every
 channel fine,

From Thee the glamour and the glow reflect and are
 divine,

I cannot, will not flout Thee more ; whate'er I have or
 be,

I give myself, my heart, my store—to find again in
 Thee.

UPWARD.

No upward yearning yet was lost, no smallest dream
 can die ;

Eternity, each moment crost, doth still about us lie ;
The humblest motion of devotion

Is purchased at tremendous cost and links with golden
 tie ;

Which fastens to the feet of God the tendrils that we
 spread ;

For had He not before us trod, our spirit were but dead.

No thought, that struggles to be free and puts forth
any bud
Or would look out and simply see (beyond the mist and
mud
That gather dimmer) just a glimmer,
Shall ever on unfruitful flee as aimless idle scud ;
And though behind it hardly leave a trace and faintly
sings,
It shall return some day at eve with blessing on its
wings.

One upward craving for blue sky and larger purer air ;
One pulse of pinions that would fly unto God's starry
stair,
In feeblest flutter of an utter
Need, is an immortality akin to all things fair ;
For we can only be the shape which would within us
grow,
And if the secret spell escape no Heaven can through
us flow.

Each groping effort full and fond hath somewhere
answer true,
And somehow is itself a bond that shall receive its due ;
And from this tangle life and wrangle
Points out to perfect rest beyond, and clasps the
hidden clue ;
Than earth more solid have I found the slightest hope
for good,
Which touches God who stands around as He has ever
stood.

GOD IS MY CANDLE.

I see my brothers groping still among the shades, that
shine
For me who have no private will and catch the gleam
divine ;
But whether it be dusk or day both ever are akin,
And still I walk a sunlit way and have the light within ;
I am not dark in deepest night of broadest creed or ken,
And if the stars have taken flight *God is my candle then.*

I hear the murmur of the hour, as others follow beams
Which burst in scornful scarlet flower to fade as dying
dreams ;

The tumult of the passing crowd that cannot pause to
pray,

Tricked by the lure of learning's cloud and its pale
wrecker's ray

Devoid of duty and the love illuming minds of men ;
While out of silence from above *God is my candle then.*

I know the earth with all its care has many a burning
torch,

That guides with meretricious glare to error's
pleasant porch,

Through gloom that in its evil arms would snuff the
glory out

And bury beauty's venal charms in rolling seas of
doubt ;

But yet the shadow of despair waits like a ghostly wen,
And in the ruin past repair *God is my candle then.*

I feel at times a curtain fall athwart the holiest lamp,
And on the cloister's solemn wall eclipse's ghastly
stamp ;

The world without becomes one blot wailed through
with mocking wind,

And earth a hopeless tangled knot that nothing can
unbind ;

But O within a sudden flame that is the light of ten
Leaps in my heart, and at His name *God is my candle
then.*

THE HOLY SATAN.

I in my palace lowly, I at this dreadful task
Sealed to a service holy still for no helper ask ;
Mine is the ceaseless doing, work that no other can,
Sadly by watch and wooing always to strengthen man ;
Only to build him stronger up by my tempting art,
Fashioned as times wax longer more to the perfect part.

God may not take my portion, God will not suffer so
Blackened by base distortion, bearing my ceaseless woe.
But for His will I labour daily and nightly worse,
He has the trump and tabor, I the perpetual curse;
Multitudes damn and doubt me grovelling at His
throne,
He incomplete without me leaves me to drudge alone.

Not for myself I weary on as the ages roll,
Chained to an office dreary, gathering tithe and toll;
But by these circuits fateful grinding His measures out,
All for a King ungrateful bringing the goal about.
Troubled the toil and endless, bitter its means and
ways,
While I pursue a friendless path with no cheering rays;
Doomed to unthankful living breathed through my
agents rude,
Fed on my death, and giving *me* but a solitude.
Continents form and crumble, systems arise and go,
Types by the thousand stumble down in the shifting
show;
Nature has clouds that dim it, the heavens and earth
their range;
I have no settled limit known, and I never change.

God in His awful distance wanteth my ghostly art,
Would not possess existence ever from me apart;
Each has the need of other unto the close of time,
I am His foe and brother, one in the cosmic chime.
Mine is the sombre shadow haunting the homes of
night,
Spread upon mount and meadow His is the laughing
light;
I am the evil dwelling grimly in creature things,
He is the goodness welling forth from eternal springs.
Yet to a far-off marriage reaching through right and ill,
Wrong and oblique miscarriage, both are inspiring
still;
Both do prepare the morrow hinted by sun and moon,
I by the sin and sorrow, He with a brighter boon.

I am His partner lowly bearing the burden's heat,
Bound by a purpose holy—He has the ruler's seat.
I along roads erratic sleeplessly moulding man
Win not his Peace Sabbatic, but universal ban.
Joy cometh nowise near me hungry for human bliss,
Mortals if using fear me, making my work amiss.
I, who procure them pleasures, counting not years or
cost,

Taste not myself the treasures always for me but lost.
Worship to Him goes daily up from priest-ridden earth,
And though His servants gaily tax me they give but
dearth.

Men for Him raise the column as to its native sky,
While I remain a solemn fate and necessity.

Ever the purblind peoples groping in shade and shame,
Toying with towers and steeples, tremble to hear my
name;

Foist upon me afflictions wrought by their own weak
hands,

Heaping me maledictions through the self-tortured
lands;

Paint me in colours growing deeper and darker yet,
When from their wicked sowing they at the reaping
fret.

Thoughts of their private plotting only on me they lay,
While they are rank and rotting just with their own
decay.

All that I do they garble, turned to offence and vice,
Paying to God the marble court and the sacrifice;
Reckoning mine their fancies tainted by mire and
mould,

Dross and the morbid dances—meting to Him the
gold.

I am not the Creator, framing their course and creed;
I am no Legislator, shaping that bruised reed.
But the whole imperfection, breaches of slighted law,
Blemish and predilection still for the fatal flaw;
Follies of their devising, blots and their native lust,
Scorn for a re-aring out of congenial dust;

These with their stains and errors, steps that delight
to be

Straying and stupid terrors, lightly are thrown on *me*.
I did not form them dimly, blent of the common clay,
Passion and powers that grimly sap them and eat
away ;

I did not mix their feelings fast with unmating fire,
Wedding to earthly reelings pulses of pure desire.

Did I unmake and mar them, fresh from the Almighty
hand ;

And with my cunning bar them, when they would
upright stand ?

Yet in their brightest jewel, volition fair and free,
Lay hid the faint and cruel germ of a fall to be.

I did but helpless follow the road marked out as mine,
And in the darkness hollow a prison with God's line.
How could I baulk my being and cheat the iron law,
Which deals me night for seeing and shuts me out in
awe ?

I just obeyed the nature, which in me sternly drew
Others, and to this stature by certain stages grew.
I do not loathe the beauty, I never hated right,
But must fulfil my duty and turn my face from Light.

Ah, who shall tell the sadness which sears my destined
bound,

And with the mirth of madness girds all my service
round ?

For when I break a nation or some poor fragile heart,
It is the obligation of my lone, awful part.

I have no choice, no action can be except for ill,
Ground to its smallest fraction within the fated mill.
And though I curse the sentence I love it because
mine,

Nor would I give repentance to earn the Peace Divine.
I know when sin is greatest in evil deed or thought,
While grief is green and latest, I do but what I ought.
No way is open other than that which God will go,
I work and am His brother—I tempt and am His foe.

I in my circuits slowly am labouring for the end,
 A climax grand and holy to which creations tend ;
 That yet may never finish the upward-climbing task,
 Nor may I once diminish my own, nor would I ask.
 And if I gain for mortals, by trying or by test,
 Escape through golden portals, I may not therefore
 rest.

The joy they reach by anguish o'er which they mount
 and shine,
 Though for their hour they languish—it cannot still be
 mine.

The sweetness in the profit by conquests won from me,
 If worlds get pleasure off it, I may not likewise see.
 For everyone a haven comes to each tossing tide,
 Or path with sorrow paven—I only stand outside.

But on I go by acrid dull streams, with penal rods ;
 My work is truly sacred, the complement of God's.
 His enemy, the spoiler of His best deeds and man's,
 I am a fellow-toiler and share His broadest plans.
 His tool, His jailer, keeping the rebels He would bind,
 I hold a watch unsleeping and purge His dust behind.
 Were I at last to perish, expunged from earth and sky,
 How could the Maker cherish or lift mortality ?
 The universal struggle, that hammers out His claim,
 By force and fraud that juggle with men, would miss
 its aim.

And thus I search new nations, within my furnace fused,
 By fire of fierce temptations—I cursing, curst, and used.

THE RED ROSE AND BLUE.

It was whiter than snow

When the Master went by—

Who would walk in His garden, and watched it below

With a loving and Fatherly eye ;

And He fondled a Lily, or played with the bell

Of a Hyacinth bowing in grace,

While His footstep was life to the buds as it fell

And they gathered fresh light from His Face ;

Ah, the Crocus looked up
With its yellowing cup,
And the Pansy bent timidly down—
For His wonderful thought filled its bosom with God
As beside it in rapture He tenderly trod,
And the Violet drew in its gown.

It was whiter than snow,
And yet pride entered in
At the joy of its gifts and the maidenly glow,
With a feeling that darkened like sin ;
And it said to itself, " I am fairer than He
With a purity sweeter than morn,
For the White Rose is brightest of all that I see
And it has not one petulant thorn."
But the Blue Roses wept,
As caressing He stept
By their borders, in reverent fears ;
While they mused on the blessings no creature would
crave,
Which He poured in the beauties He lavishly gave,
And they watered His path with their tears.

It was whiter than snow—
But the Master at last,
As He left His dear garden in fragrance to blow,
Just a look of reproach on it cast ;
And there rushed through its veins a great passion of
shame
At the wrong to His graciousness done,
And came blossoming forth in a glory of flame
With the thorns and the shadow at one.
So the White Rose turned Red,
And hung lowly its head
When again the good Father went by ;
But He took the Blue Roses away in His love
To the carpet that covers the Eden above,
And He planted them out in the sky.

THE PHANTOM CROSS.

For years I bare the burden of a cross,
With toiling footsteps up a barren hill,
Unto a dim and distant gate of glory
Framed in a heaven of clouds, and only seen
At sunrise by the watcher dutiful
Who wakes the morning with the breath of prayer.
And there was none to help me. Patiently
I climbed those steps of stone, till each a palace
Of praise became, as I poured out my heart
In sacrifice of ceaseless thanksgiving,
For the great blessing of unanswered hopes
And saving sorrow by the ministries
Of calculated suffering, and the crown
With thorns that blossomed while they pierced my brow
And burst in fragrance flooding all the ways
With sweetness like a song. I saw the crimson
Dear petals falling round in drops of blood.
Nor did I murmur at the bitter road,
The jagged cragged turns of gaunt surprise
That fronted me and frowned at every pause,
And reached forth rocky arms to thrust me down
Deep and yet deeper in unplumbed abysses
And hungered for me, body and soul. I went
Still steadfast on, and still the burden grew
More heavy and more hateful and it seemed
In that dread passion of intolerableness
A vital portion with my very flesh
And bone and tissue consubstantiate,
No alien bondage but myself sin-rotted
And dead. But now my consecrated will
Arose in arms and with its larger choice
Upheld me, as I stooped exceedingly
Beneath the inward load, and felt my limbs
Relax a faithless moment in the pains
Insufferable and their dark secret strife,
And lifted me as though on wings above
The passing weakness which had made me water ;
Till in the glow and flow of strength renewed

And added powers, I trod temptation down
Below my feet, and mounted higher yet
Upon its dust that fashioned for my feet
Foundations firm and new defensiveness.
And when at last hardly I reached the summit,
The cross I carried was no cross at all
But the mere empty shadow of a fate
That was not mine, the phantom of a woe,
Imagination's trick—no more, no less—
Which aped the ripeness of reality.
My pangs, and the bleak road unbeautiful,
The dreary drudging to the castled top
Consummate in its height, the rough hewn steps,
The iron great hands of winds that by the throat
Clutched me o'erwearied and contestingly
Strove with me to the death, the dizzy ledge,
The sudden chasms and corners, and the grim
Magnificence of sheer sharp headlong falls
Down into empty space and nothingness,
The discipline, the yoke, the angry edges
That cut like cruel swords, the beetling points
Of bayonetted bounds that shut me in,
And the lone horror of the haunted peak ;
All these were rooted in rich outwardness,
But not the burden of the blessed cross
Which while I bare I bare not verily
Save in belief, though its pure virtue ran
Right through my inmost being and was mingled
With every act and thought, and shaped my path
Unto the pattern of its archetype.
And thus I found, who passed the golden gate,
The seeming and the substance were both one,
And truth was beauty but the vision more.

THE BOOKS OF ETERNITY.

The Books were carried
To the Judge, who sat
High on the throne of thought, and worlds thereat
In silent session tarried ;

I in fear
Stood far apart and to the extreme edge
Clung, while an unshed tear
A moment blotted out the awful sight
Of nations quivering like the breeze-blown sedge
In arrows of intolerable Light.
Unsaid confession
Trembled on the lips of all,
Who owned transgression
And bowed beneath the shadow of the fall.
Not one
Dared to uplift the burden of a plea,
But with the murmur of a troubled sea
The peoples knew the fate foredone.
The Book of Life was opened, and I saw
The law
Written therein with fire and burning truth
And love's eternal youth,
While in the solemn thunder
Of each line
I felt the beating of the Heart Divine,
Which all its blessed mist would burst asunder.
Then the Book of Remembrance was unsealed,
And I
A little yet more nigh
Drew, for the doom to be revealed.
The hush fell calm and cruel
On my mind,
Strained unto hope and yet resign'd
To utmost wrath. Was I a jewel
Recorded there, if but a casual blot,
Or not?
And then another tear
Clouded my eyes,
And in the dimness I stept still more near
The white seat of all the eternities,
Under the blinding curtain
Of my grief,
Which with a foot uncertain
Sought relief.

Lo, as in ages,
One by one the pages
Were turned, in that great dreadful judgment shine ;
I read the names of friends and brothers
And of others,
But amid the thousands where was mine ?
O some were sadly blurred, and some were stains,
And all had blighted been with sin,
While many struggled forth by bitter pains,
But yet they were within.
I looked and trembled,
And a hunted cry
Of stricken woe and supreme agony
Brake from my tossing bosom undissembled ;
And then a tortured tear,
Right from my very heart,
Rushed to the eyes of darkness and despair
Which scarce Omnipotence could now repair ;
I took another step more bold, more near,
No longer self-exiled and all apart.
And there I read
As risen from out the dead,
In small and feeble letters but of flame,
Like that which glows in sacred shrines,
On the last page, *between the closing lines*,
My name.

A THEOPHANY.

O, it may be in the morning, and it may be in the eve—
He will surely on me rise
Like the sun, but in adorning which will set not or
deceive,
With a glad and soft surprise ;
And the passing of His feet will be beautiful and sweet,
When it strikes my waiting heart
In its watching drawn apart
From the turmoil of the traffic and the murmur of the
mart.

In the stable not of fable I shall find Him with His
beasts

Where He spreads their humble feasts,
And the reckless one and stranger to His love shall
see at last

The bright shadow in the manger by His blessed glory
cast,

In His thought for even cattle which about his business
go

When the shafts of winter rattle on the shield of frozen
snow :

And the path for years so prayerless in its pride and
cold and careless.

Shall beneath His presence glow.

He is coming, for I hear Him

Through the clangour and the dust
Of the world so very near Him—

And yet exiled by distrust :

But from faith that is adoring He will never be
concealed.

Though their darkness dazzle some,
And to words of true imploring He delights to be
revealed—

He is coming. He will come.

Lo, the linnet from the moorland chirrup, " Here's a
little Christ,

And I simply ask a crumb."

While the pauper in his poorland said, " I cannot be
sufficed,

And these hands are Christ's and numb."

O the enemy whose hate is my early grief and late,
Muttered low beneath His breath ;

" Though I have desired thy death,

Yet I feel the Christ within me, and He stands outside
thy gate."

Then my broken bread, in token of His love I scattered
free

To His birds a willing fee,

Up leapt their tiny voices in one carol calm and
gay

Like a fountain which rejoices in the kisses of the day.
And the beggar at my giving thawed with gratitude,
 and took
Heart of grace in grander living and a conqueror's
 proud look ;
And the foe, whom in my blindness I had scouted with
 unkindness,
Chose the friend he long forsook.
He is coming on the river,
 He is coming to the shore
In His goodness to deliver
 Men who make their bondage more ;
In the faintest, feeblest turning as of tendrils to the
 morn,
 He is calling—He is come ;
And of every better yearning He in purity is born,
Who's all Blessing and our Home.

THE DEAD GOD.

Rose a weeping and a wailing for the altars unavailing
And the temple fires grown dim,
From the high angelic hosts and the Seraphs at their
 posts
And the sworded Cherubim.
Though the worshippers were legion and they flocked
 from every region
And they builded fair the shrine,
Not with walls the pious raise by their lives of prayer
 and praise
And the humble heart divine ;
But with gold and gems and painting and the sculpture
 with the tainting
Of unrighteousness that wrought,
Or the offerings of vice and the souls that had their
 price
And in hourly sale were bought.
For the faith was empty-hearted and the light had long
 departed
From the cloister and its lamp,

And the perjured breasts were cold and misgivings like
the mould
Upon all had set a stamp ;
And amid the pleasant places shone but harlot gauds
and graces
Or lay silence of the tomb,
While the love that leapt in flame to the Presence and
the Name
Died as fruit within the womb.
Then with wailing and a weeping for religion dumb
and sleeping
And the glory faded thence,
Ring a solemn awful sound to the earth's remotest
bound,—
“ O arise, let us go hence.”

With a weeping and a wailing as if earth itself were
failing
Under some tremendous throe,
And the pillars of the land could no longer now
withstand
Weight of unimagined woe ;
Passed a glamour from the column and the sanctuary
solemn
Where the nations blindly knelt,
In the tutelary awe which was luminous with law
And by ghostly comfort felt ;
While the peoples in the motion of their impotent
devotion
Knew that something great had set,
And the words they mumbled still were but curses and
an ill
Though they bowed and babbled yet.
For the Providences reigning from the falsehood and
the feigning
With a mighty murmur fled,
And a horror grim and stark in the silence and the dark
Dropt where music had been shed ;
While from fanes' august recesses went the Ever-
lastingnesses

That alone could give man breath,
And on priests and splendid frauds and the chanted lies
and lauds
Fell a shadow more than death.
With a wailing and a weeping of the Powers that had
the keeping
Of the altars which smoked on,
Knelt a lost and lonely cry from the temples to the
sky,—
“O away, let us be gone.”

With a weeping and a wailing from the porch and
gilded railing
Of the holy fabrics doomed,
Went the Presence that had been a Magnificence
unseen
While the flower of worship bloomed.
Though they lifted high the ladder and the steps were
sins and sadder
Than the way to heaven should be,
And were washed within the flood or the blessed
martyrs' blood,
Who had suffered to be free.
Ah, it found the earth was frozen by the empty creeds
that cozen
With their superstitions fond,
As it passed into the air from the ruin past repair
Like the breaking of a bond.
There were idols framed of letters and a clanking of the
fetters
Which had eaten into lives,
And the votaries were fools of their pious toys and
tools
Or the sacrificial knives.
For the gods were naught and nameless and a
multitude and shameless,
And the mystery had flown,
While their victims bent to chance and a crowned
ignorance
And the Truth remained unknown.

With a wailing and a weeping went the hosts angelic
sweeping
Through a world without a heart,
And a voice of sorrow brake from the stillness as it
spake,
“O arise, let us depart!”

With a weeping and a wailing in a cloud of glory
sailing
Went the Spirit who was God,
And the ardent Seraphim and the sworded Cherubim,
Into spaces yet untrod.
There was many a rolling planet bright as when the
Word began it
But polluted by one fall,
And despite the gracious glow deep a rottenness below
Rested terrible on all.
Blight had seized the worship hollow and the Nemesis
to follow
Was a canker in the deed,
And no fruits of goodly faith but its dazzling idle wraith
Burst in sunshine from the seed.
Pomp of service joined with glitter of proud sacraments,
but bitter
Was the reaping at the last,
For on every soul a cloud hung as heavy as a shroud
And the course was overcast.
While the pageants and the flocking to confession were
a mocking
Or a masquerade of life,
And the verities were hid and beneath a coffin lid
By the selfish paltry strife.
With a wailing and a weeping at the icy darkness
creeping
Through creation to its Head,
Pealed a voice upon the air of an infinite despair,—
“Without honour I am dead.”



THE POTTER AND THE CLAY.

O Heavenly Potter,
Unto Thee I come,
But not with empty murmurs as do some
Because the furnace has been heated hotter,
And at the cruel pains
The flesh complains.
Not so do I address Thee, but I bless Thee
For all the suffering to which man is kin
And each dark sorrow of the day and morrow,
For every ache which heart hath known
Except for that which is my own—
The sin.

I am Thy vessel
If no chosen one,
For mighty actions to be dared and done,
And in my bosom human passions wrestle
As ever must in all—
Even blessed Paul.
And thus I sorely need Thee and would heed Thee
Amid this babblement of strife and wrong,
What e'er the vial dashed on me by trial,
To keep me up should tempting shake
My boldest purpose, and to make
Me strong.

Thou art the Potter,
And I feel Thy hand
Rests on me though I be unmeet to stand,
And holds me upright when my footsteps totter ;
For I am only clay,
And often stray.
But then I want the folding and the moulding,
About my mortal weakness which is much ;
And there, from fretting and my dull forgetting,
Falls like a beam of solemn light
In joy of mercy and its might
Thy touch.

I am a bottle
 And a worthless cup,
 For all I bring I grudge to offer up
 And at the best my utmost is but little;
 The services are mean,
 My lips unclear;
 The hand that decks the altar still may palter
 With things of evil and my breast is stone;
 And if unwilling yet I seek fulfilling
 Of many a sordid lie and lust,
 Which would pollute with shame and dust
 Thy throne.

Thou art the Potter,
 And I come to Thee
 For that sweet cleansing which can make me free,
 And curb the will which is a rebel plotter
 Against Thy holy law
 And loving awe.
 O I do crave Thy kindness on this blindness
 To pour the sunshine of perpetual day,
 And with more favour to enrich the savour
 Of sacrifices vile and slow
 Without Thy blessing, and to show
 The way.

I am an idle
 And unfaithful tool,
 Yet plunge me in the furnace of Thy school
 And pierce me with the cross which is Thy bridle;
 I need the fiercest flame,
 To know Thy name.
 And if Thou chooseth take me all and break me,
 If I may be in heart renewed and shine:
 I would be shivered through to be delivered
 From bondage foul, and scourged and scarred
 At length (however marred)
 Mine.

THE PRESENCE.

When the Presence draweth nearer,
Which is God,
And the voice upon me clearer
(While I dumbly darkly plod)
Comes, as o'er a thirsty shore—
Growing desolate and drearer
With the rod
Of affliction's maledictions—
Fall at last, in mercy cast
Slaking clod and barren sod,
Warm sweet billows finding pillows
And the rest of sorrow's breast ;
Though I feel the fatal twining
Of a horror without ray
Round me as I faintly stand
Feeling for the expected day,
Death is but the veiled shining
Or the shadow of His hand.
And I pray,
At the clouding of the way,
Lest I stumble on or stray
In the desert of the land ;
“ Keep me, guide me, hold me, hide me,
In the hollow of Thy hand.”

RETROSPECT.

In the dim shadows of the dying year
I stand apart in awful loneliness,
And read the solemn picture of the past
Unrolled before me like an open book,
Ere it is sealed and laid upon the shelf
Of faded hopes and pious memories
And pretty thoughts and fruitless resolutions.
I see it now with vain regrets and fears,
Too late for medicining of other means ;
The thing accomplished that I did not will,
Which came against my better judgment mocked

And marred and unconsenting to the last—
Yet came ; the wiser thing by me intended,
As some stretched bow without the arrow's point,
A shy and shadowy outline unfulfilled
And blurred but still most beautiful of all,
With sudden sunrise lights and flames of flowers
And promise brighter than the morn. I mark
Myself, a blotted shape, blear-eyed and lame,
Misformed and with dark devious footsteps, blind,
Stumbling and groping painfully along
A way, no way in mist impenetrable,
And beating the thick air with idle hands
Chained ; and a different form of grace appears
Beside the other and its counterpart,
Like and unlike my own, divinely human,
Serene and in a solitude of joy
Ineffable, which walks the earth a king
Over itself and all, crowned and complete
In unapproachableness of clear life—
A radiant thing, an immortality.
This is the angel in me, the sweet God
That dwells in every man a dream incarnate,
Magnificence of possibility,
And would arise and from its envelope
Of flesh and blood shine out and scatter beams
And blessings round in excellent fair deeds.
My archetype ! I see it manifold
And mystical with inward gifts and graces,
That should be mine and would engarment me
For ever in the purest panoplies
Of innocence with armed knowledge one ;
Did I but bow the stubborn head and stoop
To that dear yoke of utter gentleness,
The service free, which giving all yet garners
Both worlds of beauty with itself in God.



CREDO QUIA IMPOSSIBILE.

I do believe that in me something dwells
Akin to all and the eternal fact,
Bodied in words or grand incarnate act
Which down the ages rings cathedral bells;
And I am closer Heaven than earth, and more
The spirit of me is than painted flesh
Though cunningly with white and blue-veined mesh
Made sweet and good and pleasant to adore;
And through me thrill the symphonies of Space
To find a chord or two of answering grace,
And here and there a note of rich regretfulness
For other times and chimes in larger lands
When love responded to the Master's hands;
And I may mount to that far great forgetfulness
Which brings us nearest God, and makes the man
The likest Him and the consummate plan.
I cannot think, I would not, if it might
Be possible, this person is but clay
Compounded of the dust and low and slight,
Which takes the impress of each passing day,
Because it must from bondage unto ill,
And dares not upright stand and say "I will;"
Half educated brute, and half a toy
Or mere machine which darkly beats and babbles
And in the scored sand a moment scrabbles
Its epitaph, and dies without a joy.
For into me the currents flow, that leap
From under the pure feet of Him who shakes
The granite mountains to a shapeless heap,
And with the mighty moulding thought remakes
The suns and systems all; and from me breathes
Some fragrance of His own Diviner dresses,
That seamless robe of awful righteousness,
Wherein He walks and wherein He enwreathes
The tiniest atom of the world; I feel
My heart doth echo back His tune,
Amid the uproar of the clanging steel,
And holds within it bright perpetual June

Rose-sweet and warm and with His air delicious,
Though round me moves and mows the clamorous
throng

In seeming triumph of most deadly wrong—
Yet is this well, and sorrow most propitious.
I may not tell you why I claim the *credo*
Dearer than life and love, for words were weak
To syllable the truth if they did speak ;
And who could tell his secret so ? Could Guido
Give you the hidden mystery that throbs
And palpitates in glowing forms, and art
Which is himself and all his very heart ?
The letter kills, the bald expression robs
The glamour of its honey, dew and bloom ;
And as you seize the soul of things it perishes
Within your grasp and victory is doom,
And dust abides which some museum cherishes.
I cannot reason out this living faith,
Which burns in me and lifts me high to summits
And down the deep abysses beyond plummets,
Untrodden by the foot of man and known
To nothing mortal and yet most my own ;
No phantasy or trick, no idle wraith
Upconjured by a vain imagining,
Or fraud. It mingles with the waft of heather
On tumbled hills, and low soft murmuring
Of many bees in spaces of blue weather ;
I hear it in the purling of shy brooks,
The voice of children and the chant of birds
And laughing breezes in sequestered nooks ;
It canopies my head like heaven, it girds
My loins with giant youth and bids me run
Rejoicing to the gateways of the sun.
I cannot get away from this, it follows
My flying steps from marble messages
Of fossil forms to lonely silences,
Where whispers Nature in the hush of hollows
Serener things to gentle minds ; it falls,
My shadow, on the rim of storied chalices
Whence drank red lips of maidens fair and ripe

Long long ago, and on the broken walls
Of citadels where Time has carved its malices ;
In quarried stone and mercy's healing stripe
It hath a portion and it leaves a trace,
And babies' dimples are its dwelling place.
Impossible it is, and therefore yet
In moonrise and the mist where suns have set
And left a golden gospel and the streak
Of glancing dawn which comes and yet comes not
And dallies with its opening door, I mark
Dim prophecies of that which doth not wreak
Its will entire in outwardness of lot
Material, but still touches all the dark
With dashes somewhere of its own divinity,
And is the soul of each young life's virginity.
But I am one with this, what'er it be,
Though in the brunt of brutal might and cunning
That send our blood and tears in rivers running,
Through every time and place, and in the breath
Of pleasure grimly pulse ; this makes me free,
King of myself and the wide world and fate,
And bids me enter calm and crowned the gate
Predestined of the tomb, and builds of death
A stepping stone to grander heights. I hear
The murmur of this old and gracious verity,
In hope that singeth and sublimer fear
That reads earth's riddle though with pale temerity ;
And in the grinding of the wheels that turn
For ever round and round, and carry men
And universal Nature forth and far
With their tremendous beats, and champ and churn
Our cosmic stuff to living soul or star,
To portals of some new supreamer ken.
I cannot write you out a clear particular
Dry thesis framed by logic of my creed,
In loops and links of formulæ vermicular ;
For with myself still doth it always grow,
And puts fresh petals out for every need
Of daily use ; but in the night I know ;
And if false rays should dazzle and deceive

Or nothing seem at last quite sure and noscible,
Yet in mid darkness shall I most believe
Because I am and Truth is so impossible.

THE MIDGE AND ITS MAKER.

I. THE MIDGE.

Thou Being, whom I cannot know,
But dimly guess from far
In storied rock and star,
And feel in trumpet winds that blow
Or waters as they laugh and flow,
And witness what they are.
I am Thy creature, great God, still
And every feature shows Thy will ;
But wherefore am I made so weak
And didst Thou masterfully wreak
Thy power in me, who scarce can speak
And tremble at each ill ?
While Thou dost sit above this babble
So very grand and strong,
Untouched by any wrack and wrong
Wherein our wretched hour we dabble.
There seems no justice in the plan,
Which fashioned me so small ;
I hardly live at all,
In this poor petty fleeting span ;
And there the mountain and the man,
Rejoice and on Thee call !
And yet Thy moulding hand has wrought
Me, and is holding up in thought ;
Though slender be my lot and slight
It would work out its reason right,
And shares in the same common Light
Which comes to us unsought.
And none is formed of diverse matter,
We issue from one Fount
Whate'er the last account—
If rays of dawn or death we scatter.

Why is existence cut so short
For butterfly and bee,
That share alike in Thee
Though in Thy outside temple court ;
When each is striving for the Port,
Where only are we free ?
Why is the allotted time so mean,
With frailty spotted and unclean ?
It could have spread for ages on
And with its splendour proudly shone
Or been a tower for kingdoms gone,
Whereon a world might lean ;
But now in every breeze I flutter
And find the coming doom
Even in the morning's bloom,
And feel a woe I may not utter.

II. THE MAKER.

O murmur not thy life is brief,
And others are so long ;
The Maker does no wrong,
Who measures gladness out and grief
Which is its own divine relief
And wings thy hour with song.
For time no treasure is, and might
Withdraws its pleasures in the night ;
And the *amæba*, which will lie
In mud and misery and vie
In age with me, can never die—
But lacks thy being bright ;
I know not what ye call duration,
But mark the victory won
And duty hard yet done—
I work, within, the sole salvation.

Nor pass thy office careless by,
Because it bulks not large ;
Thou seeest not the marge
Which broader is than earth and sky
And runs out to Infinity
With universes' charge ;



The frame that reaches not a span
 To eyes, yet preaches truth—as man ;
 The envelope is not the *thing*,
 And life doth boast a deeper spring
 Than vulgar size or width of wing—
 It bears all angels can ;
 And if the shell be low, yet under
 Its shadow in each part,
 Beats My pervading Heart,
 For kindred hope—as in the thunder.

Ah, nothing common is or poor
 Or toils at useless task,
 Which does whate'er I ask ;
 Behind the beast and in the boor
 Or tiniest insect of the moor,
 Eternal forces mask.
 And times and spaces unto Me,
 Write no more traces than on sea ;
 They are but modes, whereby the clod
 And every breathing root and rod
 At last discover they are God,
 And labour to be free.
 Yes, thou, if summer mite or vernal
 And but a dying midge,
 Art too my very bridge
 From earth to Heaven and the Eternal.

THE CRY OF THE WORM.

“ Here lies poor old John Hildebrod ;
 Have mercy on his soul, Lord God,
 As he would do were he Lord God,
 And Thou but poor John Hildebrod.”

Epitaph.

Be merciful to me, Lord God, as I would pity Thee,
 Wert Thou as I a crumbling clod with scarce a fancy
 free ;
 Made only, it is writ, of dust which dances at Thy
 breath,

By sin corroded as by rust, with native seeds of death ;
A groping creature, deaf and blind and vainly learning
still,

While tost about by every wind of passion or of ill !
Whatever be Thy tune, O Lord, I cannot choose but
tread

The destined measure, if the sword is hanging o'er my
head ;

And sick or sorry I must keep in time with every tone,
I step it through my haunted sleep, unwilling and alone.
Within this gaunt and ghastly bound of rank and
rotting flesh,

I go the same dull dreary round and evermore afresh.

Be merciful to me, Lord God, as I would pity Thee,
Wert thou as helpless as the sod or fading as the tree !
Up in that wondrous house of blue where suns in glory
shine,

While nought but darkness is my due, dost Thou
consider mine ?

This is not builded on the rock, my walls are very weak
And tremble at the shade of shock—they totter as I
speak ;

To any peril that may chance I do but hopeless bend,
The sport of spiteful circumstance I dumbly wait the end.
To Thee is man a tiny mote a minute in the ray,
A sand-mark idle fingers wrote ere it was washed away ?
For be one cottager or Guelf, he is in frailty grown ;
I dare not say I am myself, and nothing is my own.

Be simply just to me, Lord God, as I would unto Thee,
Wert Thou beneath the iron rod which crushes all I see !
I am but fashioned out of clay, a vessel of no worth,
To live and struggle my dim day and be resolved to
earth.

O treat me not as precious gold which hottest flames
may try,

I carry on my face the mould of this mortality,
And, in each trifling word and deed, there is the fateful
ring

Of dissolution and a need which ever to me cling.

Deal not with me as chalices which are of grander kin,
I show mere evil images and centuries of sin.
At birth I found a hideous taint which errors more
enhance,
Whereunder I do flinch and faint, a grim inheritance.
Be simply just to me, Lord God, as I would unto Thee!
Wert Thou as lightly at the nod of woes we cannot flee,
Foredoomed to failure do I come into this care and
wrong,
With many mingled aims, though some are beautiful
and strong;
I am not master of my powers or even a single nerve,
And naked still I hold my dowers for others whom I
serve;
Each moment I new sadness prove chained in this
prison frame,
Beyond which I can nowise move who play a desperate
game;
Around me hostile forces fret, with which a traitorous
camp
Inside is leagued against me yet—I only bear their stamp.
This is a stage of lasting strife with threads of crimson
crost,
A living death, a dying life, and from the outset lost.

MAN THE MAKER.

Dear God, Thy cheeks are very thin,
And feebly dost Thou go
Through the creations out and in,
Because my prayers are slow;
And none but such as these disperse
The darkness of the universe,
Through which we dimly know.
My praises oft, which built Thee fat
And full with leaping life,
By doubts that on me sorely sat,
When I would fondly aim thereat
Were quenched by evil strife.

O, it is true Thy mercy made
My poverty, and wrought
Its grandeur on a thing of shade
By every passion bought ;
But still the tiniest wavelet, pent
Within its mother continent,
Imprints its little thought.
But Thou art moulded by my hand
And with my worship shaped,
As winds and waters form the land
Which, though they never may command,
By them is carved and draped.
Thou feedest on my faith and love
While famine comes from fears,
And all Thy gardens up above
Are watered by my tears ;
If I forget Thee, Thou dost pine
Out of the majesty Divine,
And tremble at the years.
Devotion is the life that thrills
The Glory that Thou art,
And like a thousand thousand rills
With more than bliss and beauty fills
The heaven of Thy great Heart.
And so I nourish Thee at morn
With prayers as precious sops,
And pledge to Thee in sadness born
My troth in tender drops ;
At noontide and at eve I raise
My services of solemn praise,
A fount that never stops.
And in the night I often turn
My waking hopes to Thee,
With wingéd thoughts that speed and spurn
The lower air and words that burn,
That Thou may'st warmer be.
I clothe Thee richly with the dress
Of reverent awe and care,
And in that robe of righteousness

I have a humble share ;
For it is woven of my true
Confessions as with threads of blue,
And creeds that greatly dare.
My witness is Thy sure defence
Which bids Thee grander grow,
Thy shoes are of my confidence,
My martyrdoms and penitence
Red in Thy halo glow.

Thus, though I am but common clay
And mingled with the dust,
My fingers on Thee have their way
To model with their trust ;
And my creation Thou art much
Responding to each tone and touch,
As unto Thee I must.
Thou waxest with my worship strong
And in this frailty small,
My zeal doth make Thy bosom song
And lighten duties that were long—
I fashion Thee in all.

HOME SICKNESS.

I often have a sense of other lands,
A glow, a glimmer
Of unremembered unforgotten times,
When earth grows dimmer ;
Which moves me like the touch of loving hands,
Mixed with the music as of distant chimes.
A thing familiar
And yet so alien, most remote and near ;
A sweet auxiliar
Beyond all language beautiful and dear,
While past the unmeasured bounds and awful rounds
Of unpathed planets, through their purple dome
For ever swinging and for ever singing ;
A strange dim dwelling far, and still a Home.

Betwixt the sorrow and the parent sin
It draweth nigher
From an inviting and forbidden shore,
With message higher ;
It seems unknown, and is in all akin,
And brings me earnest of no foreign lore.
Betwixt the falling
Of shadows tempting me to shame and wrong,
And the calm calling
Of holy bells that chant the evensong ;
It cometh to me then with larger ken,
Like the unsealing of a sacred tome.
I feel a drawing and an overawing
Of something great, which is and is not Home.

And in the bosom of warm love and light,
When pulses quicken
With rest and rapture, for another hope
I dumbly sicken ;
For solace more than meets the ear and sight,
The vision of a vaster horoscope.
My soul seems banished
From grander courts that rouse my fear and faith,
A kingdom vanished
But veiled not quite by earth's refulgent wraith ;
And from the tenderest ties of lower skies
Bright with the grace of Hellas and of Rome,
I turn unsated like a life unmated,
And stretch dark hands to a conjectured home.

I know by these blind stirrings in my heart
Which beats in prison,
I yet have might though fettered that would mount
To suns unrisen,
Wherein I have a birthright and a part,
And drink the fulness of its native fount.
The sense of sadness
Which never leaves me in my work or play,
Proclaims the gladness
Elsewhere of the old lost unsetting day.
I find the closest bond has links beyond,

And mirth the mocking of an evil gnome,
While in my weeping and the haunted sleeping
I feel the fretful wings that crave their home.

BLIND HANDS.

Dear God, in darkness
I uplift to Thee
Dim eyes that cannot see
Amid the horrors of this stony starkness,
Blind hands in bondage that would fain be free
To work their little lot—and yet may not.
What can I offer
Thee who grantest all that fills my coffer,
My slender purse,
And every winning save my own sad sinning,
Which ends a season for a new beginning
With its curse ?

Thou art the Maker
And the Poet too,
Not I who vainly woo
Thy sea of Light which whelms me like a breaker
And does the task which I would feebly do,
Or washes from my toil the earthly soil.
Alas, my guesses
Fall but weakly, and Thy wisdom blesses
Whate'er is right
And honest aiming, if with error's maiming ;
For how can I, a shadow, plead a claiming
Out of night ?

My work is nothing
And my beauty Thine,
When Thou dost greatly shine
Upon me, and art thus my strength and clothing ;
The good that I have wrought is but Divine,
The stains that still must be, belong to me.
The faith for living,
Is not even mine but Thy free giving ;

And cometh love,
The bread of staying in the strife and playing
Without which every breath of man were slaying,
From above.

I am no Poem,
Father, at my best,
In borrowed glory drest,
But just a line or two of Thy grand Proem
To something higher and not now exprest ;
I hear its tune afar, and often mar.
And each creation
Of my heart is all Thine inspiration,
Though poorly drawn ;
And every gleaming jewel on the seaming
Of my spoiled garment, is Thy splendour beaming
To the dawn.

MAN IS WHAT WOMAN MAKES HIM.

Man is what woman makes him,
And so I say, God bless her ;
A hero, if to her white breast she takes him
When downward passions pull,
And moulds him beautiful—
Her bulwark and assessor ;
But if she fools and then at last forsakes him,
A low and lost transgressor.
But when her fingers play upon his heart
As though it were her lute strings,
No longer mild and mute strings,
He leaps to glory and the goodlier part.

Man is what woman makes him,
And so I say, God bless her ;
A noble worker, if she wins and wakes him,
And watches through the night
With him to morning light—
A stout and staunch confessor ;
But if with false or trifling arts she breaks him,
No mate or wrong's redresser.



But when she breathes her love into his life
And bathes him in her beauty,
He thrills to each high duty
And comes as conqueror out of every strife.

Man is what woman makes him,
And so I say, God bless her ;
A true yoke-fellow, if she tends and takes him
With each imperfect plan,
A frail and fallen man,
In suffering her assessor ;
But if she asks completeness and forsakes him,
He must be more transgressor.
For he is only human at the best,
And she may urge him forward,
As waves together shoreward
Beat on, and but in dying gain their rest.

Man is what woman makes him,
And so I say, God bless her ;
A helper in the struggle, if she wakes him
From drowsy popped sloth,
To keep the eternal troth
With Christ as his Confessor.
But if she slumbers, or with slighting breaks him,
No aid or ill's redresser.
For her pure softness is a heaven-sent stayer
Yet stronger far than iron,
And her weak arms environ
His force like blessings of perpetual prayer.

“WILT THOU HAVE THIS WOMAN ?”

Brother, *wilt thou have this woman ?*
She is frail, though very fair
With the glory on her hair,
And the red rose laughing on her lips ;
She is tender, she is human,
And doth know of evil and eclipse.



Wilt thou reverence her weakness,
As thou would'st the blessed Christ
Left in lonely awful meekness
At the world's one bitter tryst ?
Then thou may'st, but trembling, O man,
Take as trust Divine this woman.

Brother, *wilt thou have this woman ?*
She is shy as evening shade,
Excellently meant and made
And compounded of all soft and sweet ;
But most brittle and most human,
Nor least lovely in her straying feet.
Wilt thou choose this one to cherish
In such imperfection shod,
Who without thy care must perish
Though the masterpiece of God ?
Then thou may'st devoutly, O man,
Take from Him this sacred woman.

Brother, *wilt thou have this woman ?*
She has thoughts beyond thy dreams
Marvellous as moonlit streams,
And a faithfulness to thee not known ;
But she is unarmed and human,
An eternal child, with ways her own.
Wilt thou keep and comfort duly
Her in high or low estate,
And uphold in honour truly
One so dear and delicate ?
Then thou mayst, but humbly, O man,
Take and wear this jewel—woman.

Brother, *wilt thou have this woman ?*
She is wonderful and slight,
Though a mystery of might,
Stronger than the death that is to be ;
But all exquisitely human
With devotion deeper than the sea.
Wilt thou love this priceless treasure
(As a soul elect to save,

Not a toy to break at pleasure),
And her only to the grave ?
Then thou may'st, rejoicing, O man,
Take thy guardian angel, woman.

CRUCIFIED AFRESH.

I had a vision of a Tree,
Which men had grimly planted,
A thing that breathed and panted
And dolorous and dread to see ;
It spread abroad two mighty arms,
As under black and bitter charms
Accursed and enchanted.
But all the heaven above was dark,
Earth trembled and stood still,
The whole creation's populations
Were dumb, and dimly seemed to hark
The Maker's awful will.
And on the Tree a Sacred Form
Hung in exceeding sadness,
Yet conquered by the gladness
That shook him like a summer storm ;
Innumerable fiends and foes
Heaped on Him shameful words and woes,
In murder and in madness.
With savage scorn each cruel thrust
Of crimson nails and spears,
Was through his riven bosom driven ;
But could not slay His solemn trust,
Which triumphed over fears.
But in a moment then I saw
The multitudes departed,
Which had in hate upstarted,
And I alone was left in awe.
For, ah, those hostile hands were mine
Which stabbed the Blessed One Divine,
So dear and broken-hearted.
My sins had daily pierced Him sore,

And were a scourging rod ;
Though that red-fruited tree was rooted
With burdens I had made the more,
Within the heart of God.

For every time I chose to stray
And fell or freely stumbled,
With pride still never humbled,
The suffering on His shoulder lay ;
And His the anguish and the loss,
When resolutions turned to dross
Or faiths beneath me crumbled.
And if I yielded to the flesh
For which He greatly died,
Those wounds with weeping from their sleeping
Burst open all and bled afresh,
And He was crucified.

MY DIVINE FATHER.

Being beyond all names, blessed, benign,
Throned above frosts and flames looming malign ;
Health of us, Heart of us, living only by greatness of
giving ;
Fount of the universe breath,
Passion and joy, treasure or toy,
By a perpetual death !
Riding on thunder, tracing in straws—
Stars cleft asunder, goodness and laws ;
Ever expressing mercy and might,
Ever caressing worlds with fresh light.
Many the honours fair carried by fire and air,
Unto Thy shrine ;
Yet would I trembling rather
Worship Thee but as Father,
Dearest and mine,
Dreadful, Divine.

Worlds are Thy garments worn thus for an age,
Ere with new vesture morn brings a new stage.

Mystical, terrible, flowing on through a measureless
growing
Forth from original Night,
Into broad runs, systems and suns,
Scattering orbs in Thy flight.
Kindness and terror guard Thee and guide
Safe from all error, far above pride.
Judgment and pity compass Thee round,
Leaving the city holier ground,
Making the country sweet just with Thy passing feet,
Until they shine.
Yet do I boldly gather
Out of all titles, Father,
Richest of Thine,
Gentle, Divine.

CHRIST AND THE MURDERER.

Dear sinner, that poor red right hand which struck
the fatal blow,
Was lifted against My command and Me it first laid
low.
Betwixt thee and thy dreadful aim, because I loved thee
best
And had the one eternal claim, I threw My bleeding
Breast.
The knife beat back My mighty Love, wherein Thou
hadst no part
Less than all wealth of Heaven above, and pierced this
broken Heart.
Thy hatred vented most on Me its bitterness and wrath,
And flouted Mercy that set free as air the upward
path.
I felt the fatal wound, that deep of guilty murder drank,
Opening the silent lands of sleep, and with thy victim
sank.
The horror lay not upon him alone, which to Me cried ;
I knew its presence cold and dim, and also truly died.
No homicidal thought could fail to stab, no stubborn
pride ;

Each angry feeling was a nail, which tore My tender
side.
And every pulse of passion, made of wedded mocks and
scorns,
Wove for My Head in awful shade another crown of
thorns.
The cutting words were as the spear which racked My
human Flesh,
And wrung from it the crimson tear and crucified
afresh.
The very looks so base and black were harder than the
rod,
They rained as tempest on My back and scourged the
helpless God.
The strokes, the insults and the ire heaped on that
slaughtered frame,
Yet kindled Me a burning fire of solitude and shame.
For I shall suffer in the law which justly takes thy
breath,
And hang with thee and grimly draw new terrors out of
death.

GOD OUR HOME.

It is not any mortal space nor tenderest human tie,
Wherein I have a resting place and infant-wise may lie;
Each earthy bond it's far beyond, and dearest when I
die.
O softer than the sweetest, most blessed and the
meetest
Of every link whereby we drink at fountains the
completest!
The mother and her babe must part, although her
breast be heaven,
And likest to God's own great Heart and with His holy
leaven;
The bride in her pure bridal raiment must give at once
the dreadful payment
With her young virgin charms,
If death should come and be the claimant,

And leave her bridegroom's arms.
But kingdoms to their doom shall tumble, and pass a
shadow Rome ;
Yea, heaven and earth in ashes crumble, and never
touch my Home.
It is above the changeful sod nor mingled of the clay,
The awful Fatherhood of God which lights this ghastly
play ;
Whereon I find, in wave and wind, what cannot pass
away ;
A bulwark from the billow, a refuge and a pillow,
When friendships bright that take not flight bow as the
weeping willow ;
My darlings often from my side, in tears and woe and
thunder,
Have gone with beauty and their pride and we were
torn asunder ;
The loves that I in weakness human did truly form with
faithful woman
Have proved a bitter lot,
And I dismated was, and no man
Has lived and suffered not.
But if the suns and stars do dwindle and in another
dome
New planets into glory kindle, God will abide my Home.

THE BURDEN OF EXPRESSION.

Dear Father,
The lesson which I read in all—
It thrusts its meaning on me rather,
In every rise and nobler fall—
Is nothing more than this ;
By scarlet cheeks' confession
Or ballad or a kiss,
The burden of expression.
The person and the thing that court our seeing,
May nowise rot in idle rest,
But strive to utter forth their best
By simple being.

Though they may fight against the law
And never know it,
Nor sage nor poet,
And struggle on as helpless as the straw
Or feebly play
Within the energies of iron,
That do environ
And crush to better forms the foolish clay.
The sot, immersed in sense, who rises up
With red and rheumy eyes to drink
And staggers daily on the brink
Of suicide, as 'twixt the crime and cup
He trembles;
Still in his blackest bout
Of basest orgies, lower than the beast,
Despite his hideous wallowings resembles
The maiden like a star
In brightness of her bloom tricked out
For bridal feast
With all the graces ready to her hand
And blushing over for a queen's command
Or conquest—but so far;
He seeks to say, as she, the life within
And stamp himself upon the frame external
Of the great Cosmos which he feels akin,
And like him part of the Eternal.
And in creation Thou dost dimly wreak,
Or sometimes clearly, just Thyself and speak
A word, a sentence,
Unto the listening heart
Which dwells in prayer apart;
And, lo, one hears and rushes to repentance.
The seasons,
They are Thy varying moods and modes
Which teach us more than fossil codes
The splendour of the Spirit's reasons;
And in the red leaf and the tumbling rain,
Thou art fulfilled by joy or pain
One ethical sweet moment.
The lover smarting from his loss

And groaning under the dear cross
Which carries him,
Though his poor tearful eyes are dim
And see no mercy, might have guessed the *no meant*
Thy mantle dashed before his gaze
And amorous grasp,
Awaking blindly but to clasp
The blessed haze.
The grim and gory
Lanes of long battle-fields where shot and shell
Have made a human hell,
That dupes turn glory ;
These are Thy efforts marred by us
And mangled thus,
To show Thyself (though in distorted channels)
Written on the receptive panels
Of common Nature's canvas, wrought
Into incarnate thought.
Thy methods are not twain,
O God—O Father,
As I would call Thee rather—
Above mere bliss and pain ;
The track of trial
Which purifies and moulds the penitent
In flames of self-denial,
And purpose of a self-development ;
Commensal tasks and social aims,
And private claims ;
The gloom of winter and blue skies of Florence,
Self-hate and self-abhorrence.
And Thou in us, O beautiful and best,
For all our carnal groping
And madness of warped will
Which cleaves to bitter dust and weds with ill,
Yet in each ray of hoping
Art manifest.
Perpetual contest of the ravening brute
Within us, chained a while but never mute,
Does not disturb the balance of all things
Which if unconscious pant

And press along a scale of many strings,
Still upward and co-operant
Somehow to some great final issue ;
And foe alike and friend,
With every vital nerve and tissue
Are woven with the death and pride,
Though we see but their ragged side,
To the convincing and consummate End.





SECTION VII.

Scarlet and Gold.

SCARLET AND GOLD.

Scarlet for lips and gold for the tresses,
Balm for the bosom seat of all truth,
Fire for the love and loyal caresses
Burning and shining out of sheer youth ;
Snow for the whiteness, heart's infiniteness,
Drawn from the deep
Heavenly mountains' virginal fountains,
Rainbowed with sleep !
Ice of the winter, pledge for the purity
Guarding a jewel sacred from strife ;
Terrible coldness, awful security
Sealing the honour dearer than life.

Scarlet for lips and gold for the tresses,
Lilies for fair and beautiful arms
Opening with shy and shadowed addresses
Gladly to suffering exquisite charms ;
Roses for splendour, spells that surrender
Wholly their bliss ;
Seal of all fragrance, vision and vagrance,
Kind as God's kiss.
Day with its breadths for gifts of her lavishment
Not without thorns and clouds in the light,
Night with its purple robe for a ravishment
Mingling the flame and frost in one might.

Scarlet for lips and gold for the tresses,
Gray for the English glory of eyes
Lit beyond dreams of all poet guesses,
Fresh with the dew from dawning of skies ;
May for her moral, pink of the coral
Warming her cheek

Cunningly painted, sad in a sainted
Aureole meek.

Bloom of the grape, and summer for suavity
Clothing her acts that nothing may bend,
Iron for purpose armed with a gravity
Stately to one predestinate end.

Scarlet for lips and gold for the tresses,
Breath of the ocean wind for her way
Saucy and sure, the green wildernesses
Wide for the freedom strong and her stay.
Rills for her motion, rocks her devotion
Rooted in trust ;

All that is pleasant, in her is present—
Works what it must.

Such are our daughters, gentle and womanly,
Tender and fearless, faithful and true ;
Doing their daily services humanly,
Giving to man and the Maker their due.

SWEET AND SEVEN.

I.

In the shade of the cottage she drudges and sings
At her toil, sweet and seven,
Like a bird out of heaven,
Though a child yet a woman in trouble that clings ;
With no mother to help her, mid hearts as of stone
All alone, all alone,
Yet she waits on her father and works for the rest
With her best, with her best ;
And for them bears the load and provides for the
morrow
With a matronly wit
And the bosom true knit,
Finding sunshine in sorrow.
In the shade of apartness she suffers and smiles
At the shock of affliction,
For it bears benediction
And in smiting it carries the balm that beguiles ;

While the glory of youth is a fountain of song
Very strong, very strong,
And it kindles the darkness that has not a name
Into flame, into flame ;
And the child that for love labours on without wages
In that infinite trust,
Because only she must,
Has her foot on the ages.

II.

Mistress of many,
Subject to none,
Maid by a righteous resolve, like a Queen
Forth to the fight she goes bravely as any
Where is the duty or work to be done.
Crowned though unseen ;
Sceptred and served with a kingdom her own,
Blessing and blest by the heirs of unrest
Sharing her portion and laid on her breast,
If yet unknown ;
Bow to her, vow to her homage that's meet,
Brushing away the coarse dust from her feet.
First in the county,
Last in the care
Dealt to herself on her generous track,
Scattering presents to each of her bounty,
Open as daylight, enough and to spare,
Not coming back ;
Beauty and riches and rank to her fall
Doubled, divine by the charms that refine
Charity knowing no boundary line
Saving her all ;
Give to her, live to her glory and praise—
Ah, she is higher than honours can raise.

III.

She's always long
And always late,
She never did a tiny wrong
Nor gathered up her skirts to hate ;
But just alike in pain and pleasure

With cats and curates and with kings
 She metes to all the same mild measure
 In grand affairs or bonnet strings ;
 Her modes and morals, joys and loves
 No more important than her gloves,
 By some queer squinting or distortion
 Lie on one level of proportion.
 She never goes
 Without a dog,
 And has no special friends or foes
 Nor thoughts outside the Decalogue ;
 Distinctly good and dull her marches,
 Along the humdrum beaten way,
 Avoid the heaven of rainbow arches
 And sordid earth and common clay ;
 Without a colour or a creed
 She knows not luxury or need,
 A mere appendage to her colley
 With no redeeming vice or folly.

IV.

Downright black and ugly, Madam—aye and odd ;
 Dreadful, yet a child of Adam and of God ;
 Not a feature with apology for grace,
 Like a creature out of season and of place ;
 But in spite of many a fault with a pinch of saving salt
 In that heterogeneous mixture,
 And a sense of duty calm singing through life as a
 psalm
 Not a fancy but a fixture ;
 O yes, pick her all to pieces,
 Pick out every wart and wen,
 So unlike your model nieces
 Fattening for the marriage pen !
 Quite a horror, in the turning of that frame,
 Formed as by a madman's churning for some game
 To a sample past the rules of finished art
 With her ample waist and every shapeless part !
 Meant to be a scarecrow, made for the cherry-clack and
 shade,

And in short a perfect shocker,
 Hardly with the right to be granted to a toad or tree—
 All you say is clear as Cocker !
 But when this and worse you utter
 In your slander's cruel feast,
 Adding too a limp and stutter—
 Give me Duty and the Beast.

V.

Full of charms her little body,
 Nothing in it sham or shoddy
 Or with any hint of stain,
 But in spite of pink and white
 And allurements infinite
 With a little empty brain ;
 Very sweet
 And very stupid,
 Though with all the arms of Cupid
 And a parish at her feet—
 With her roses and her poses and her dainty upturned
 nose's
 Challenge, which it's doom to meet.
 Snow and summer must have married
 And in loyal union tarried
 On her bosom and her brow,
 But no trace within that face
 Of one reason for her grace,
 Though we all before it bow ;
 Very fair
 And very foolish,
 With broad acres at Balhoolish
 And a heaven within her hair,
 Every section worth protection and a figure of
 perfection—
 Nought but mind that needs repair.

VI.

Priscilla is too good to live—
 Indeed she's ever dying,
 With care for weakness fugitive
 And errors round her crying ;

Her busy mop keeps plying,
With all the labour she can give
To send our sins a-flying—
It is her one prerogative ;
But in her prim and proper sphere
Which nothing vile may enter,
She will forget the Devil here
Who was the First Dissenter.
And if she had a broader plan
Or noted dirty dishes,
And dwelt not in the tiny span
Just bounded by her wishes,
She'd find two sorts of fishes
And some not fit for cooking pan,
Or only food for swishes,
And man at bottom only man ;
But by her crystal palace girt
And with her white virginity,
She sees not our divine has dirt—
Though she is pure Divinity.

VII.

This is the Baby-woman, see !
So exquisite and artless,
As playful as a cat and free—
Though some believe her heartless.
I do not know nor greatly care
If she has real affection,
Or but the semblance and to spare—
It is not worth dissection.
Her face is infantine and sweet,
The life has purple patches ;
But when you are not at her feet
A captive, look for scratches.
She says most hard and cruel jests
With manner soft and simple,
And if a wounded soul protests
She answers with a dimple ;
Her air is innocence and truth,
As if all girls were sisters

And she immortal smiling Youth—
But O the blessing blisters!
And so I leave her quite alone,
A white eternal Kitten;
If for these words I must atone,
Be purred on, coaxed and bitten.

VIII.

Limp and lazy and with hazy notions of her neighbour's
due

But to self devoutly true,
Calmly taking all and making no addition to out stock—
Not for orphans even a frock,
Not a petticoat or particle
Of one useful winter article;
There she lays her pampered length
And her lax voluptuous strength
On the cushioned couch, and lingers over the last book
With her warm white drowsy fingers and a dreamy
look,

Half asleep and half awaking as she idly turns
Still the leaves, awhile forsaking toys for which she
burns.

Men are dying, women crying at her very palace door,
But across that easy floor
She would never once endeavour to uplift her languid
state

To redeem a soul from fate;
No one yet has seen her mightiness
Troubled, save about mere flightiness,
For some spoiled and petted cat
Or her new Parisian hat;
Then those crumpled carnal members stir and heave
the frame

And from out its torpid embers rouse the hidden
flame,

As the mountain of indulgence in the glow that gives
Clothing of a strange effulgence for a moment lives.

IX.

Tired and trembling
With a foot that falters on the ground,

And with open arts dissembling
All the burden that is always found,
As she totters to and fro
With a pleasant word for each,
Cheering hearts within her reach,
Good alike to high and low ;
Such is Granny
With her soft and silvered head of frost,
Not without an air uncanny
To the children whom she may accost,
But a treasure to us all
With the wisdom rich and ripe,
And the healing in the stripe
Which at times may lightly fall.
Never fiction
Did devise a comforter so dear,
One whose look is benediction
And to laughter turns the unshed tear ;
If she fumbles now and then,
Yet her misses are more true
With the love's compelling clue,
Than more perfect deeds of men.

X.

Tall as a lily and red as a rose
Never the same for a minute,
Changing her temper or beautiful pose
Ere she has time to begin it ;
Always at play in her will and her way,
Laughing and loving and jesting
Up above cares and our homelier snares,
Save in her slumber unresting.
Tall as a lily and red as a rose
And as deliciously fragrant,
Making the ground of each pilgrimage close
Start of some humour more vagrant ;
Tawny her hair and alluring the air
Wreathing her path like caresses,
Making each boast he is favoured the most
Whom she the latest addresses.

Tall as a lily and red as a rose
Not without petulant bristles,
Pleasing and pricking impartially those
Gladdened by plums and epistles ;
Breezy and blonde and provokingly fond,
Turning on lovers her arrows
Pardoned so much for the delicate touch,
Coaxing the hearts that she harrows.

XI.

Too old and timid and an hourly burden
Unto herself and even her closest kin,
She does the little that she can and more
Than thousands with her peaked and palsied fingers
And head that nods in sympathy a tune.
She feels she has outgrown the welcoming
That once outran her services, and turned
The day to pleasure and the night to peace;
And frets to see the puckered brow that gives
But yet denies at heart the grudged attention,
And lips compressed that crying "yea" spell "nay,"
With side-long looks and whispered jealousies
Of place and person. Life is one sad load
For her unequal shoulders, and she bows
Beneath the dull disharmony of things
As one outside the world in which she moves
And has no part or precious interest.
Aloof from all as at a lonely summit,
She hears afar the muffled sounds that break
As on a distant shore, and in the shadow
With great dim eyes of wonderment stoops down
And catches now and then some splintered gleams
Not unfamiliar quite and yet not hers,
And then she gathers up herself in God.

XII.

Mocking, gracious
With enchanting airs she walks
Through the world that grows more spacious,
As she moves about and talks :
With a malice

Hardly seen and yet put on,
When your mouth would meet the chalice
Of her scarlet lips she's gone,
With a bitter taste that fitter
Seems to rankle in the mind,
Like old sheaves of dead rose leaves,
And is all she drops behind.
Is she woman,
Or a witch of ruddy frost,
Admirable, whom yet no man
Loved but ever loved and lost ?
Soft, surprising
In the sweetness of her mood,
Then she asks with tantalising
Grace new passion for her food ;
And her gleamy eyes with dreamy
Fascinations to you cling,
Till you wake and with the ache
Find you only have the sting.

XIII.

Naughty and nice with no feelings of ice,
Easily wooed but not won,
Quickest to aid and not bought at a price
Pleasant to all and to none ;
Wayward and charming and often alarming
Folks of decorum and nerves,
Yet from the wildest recalled to the mildest
Mood if it succours and serves ;
Half of her kitten and half of her boy,
Wholly a puzzle and pet,
Treating you either as king or a toy
Made to adore and forget.
Fixed and uncertain and timid and daring,
As it may humour her ends,
Kindness itself and a torment not sparing
Even the fondest of friends.
Nobody trusts her, nobody hates her,
Always so pretty and glad,
Nobody minds her, nobody mates her,

And she makes every one sad.
 Mischievous, merry, admired and a pest,
 Still she has honour and doubting
 Going through life and her duties well-drest,
 Playing and helpful and pouting.

XIV.

She's all elbows and thumbs
 And sharp angles and edges,
 With a gaze more than human that measures and
 plumbs
 Your most secret pursuits hid by curtains or hedges;
 With an awkward intrusion defying seclusion,
 And gathering crumbs
 From your library ledges
 For the feast (not your asking) of awful unmasking.
 And she lives in a rage, every hour, every stage,
 With herself and society and its impiety;
 For whatever may be must be bad,
 Must be sad, must be mad,
 And by her to be mended or ended.
 O her whisper is warm as an average storm
 And as savage,
 While a cloud seems to wrap her imperious form
 In a passion to plunder or ravage.
 She is clumsy of gait but walks straight
 As her purpose, and never turns back
 From her dark and predestinate track,
 In her ire and desire
 Which no trouble can tire,
 Seeking fuel and food from her murderous mood
 While behind her she leaves but dead characters'
 wrack.

XV.

With the stream and the multitude drifting,
 And with similar straws cut by similar laws
 To the same proper shaping and shifting,
 But with never a thought of uplifting
 To the blue sky above the sweet incense of love;
 There she goes,

With her dainty particular toes
That would not be aspersed by the drop of a puddle,
And shrink back from a muddle ;
The same pattern as this one and that one and all,
Like her sofas and chairs, regulation affairs ;
At the breakfast and ball
And the afternoon visit and orthodox round,
She is perfectly sound
And delightfully small.
Nothing wrong in her dress, nothing right in her ways
Before heaven and God,
Though she may as she passes just give Him a nod
Now and then, but alas ! never prays.
She has plenty of body and something like mind
Under pretty control,
And a beautiful polish and paint on the rind,
But beneath all the varnish and elegant garnish
Not a trace of a soul.

XVI.

One of those fleshly women with full lips
Of summer, animal to the finger tips,
With heavy jowl and heaving breasts that pant
In passionate throbs they care not to conceal,
With greedy eyes that chain you and enchant
By messages of what they would reveal ;
A magazine of vice ; a lustful face,
That bursts upon you like a tropic flower
In all the splendour of its crimson space
And savage beauty and Satanic power
Of sensuous throat, and large voluptuous chin
That rocks upon the waves of her fierce breath
Unschool'd to keep its tale of leachery in
And conquering love yet crueller than death.
Large lazy limbs that fit the exuberant frame,
And move to music of the glorious shame
Outshining in each hot lascivious look
And rippling from the mouth in rosy flame,
Burnt in all letters of that human book
And hanging from each little tag and hook.
A furnace fed with fuel of live store,

The souls of men that heat her raging heart
And still fresh fury to the blood impart,
She daily thrives on victims and asks more.

XVII.

I was busy, of course, in the sweet of a sonnet,
When she came without name, without shame,
Unannounced, with excuses and worse—a new bonnet
And her good-natured face in a flame ;
But I wanted a rhyme, not a pitiful reason
Of statistics and facts
And political tracts,
So her presence and poke then were quite out of
season

And high treason.

I was going to dine and with visions of wine
And dear faces and turtle,
When she popt in to hurtle
A fresh tale at my head, though the table was spread ;
While she kept me in woe, treading on my pet toe,
Till the dinner was ruin
And the cook cross as Bruin,
And each savoury dish done just right to my wish
Was quite spoiled and digestion's implacable foe.
I was starting by train in a hurry and rain,
When she seized my poor buttonhole
And held on,
With some yarn about meats and the mutton-hole
And New Zealand and freezing and sneezing—
Till my last chance was gone.

XVIII.

God made her, God bade her
Simply to go forth and witness
In her frailty and unfitness,
As He clothed her and betrothed her
To Himself and to no other, mate or brother ;
Simply with the message of His love
Ripe and red-hot from above,
From the sunny fountains and the golden mountains
Whence comes down the Holy Dove,

In the mercy and the might and the dark excess of
light.

So she went

All alone because commanded, single-handed,

With her one sublime intent

Only to proclaim the pact

And the fact,

With the wonder of the awful endless act.

Sisters turned aside, she went and still straight on,

Shipwrecked on the hidden shoal

Oftentimes till all but life itself had gone,

To the goal.

God bade her, God made her

Like Himself at last, in perfect beauty

Of a consecrated will offered whole in good and ill,

And delight of duty.

XIX.

Who is here, who is there, with a craze or a crotchet,

With a mandate and mission for all,

Or the last bit of news—she is certain to botch it—

And the message that's not from St. Paul?

Who is never at ease and is always in motion

With her peppery tales and the pills of devotion,

Up and down like a carrier's cart,

In your street better known and more heard than her
own

And the voice of the backstairs and mart?

With her curious eyes and inquisitive nose

And the foot that despises our weaker repose

Poked in any retreat but your pocket—

Who is this, on each floor and at every door

Which if shut she is sure to unlock it?

To and fro, high and low, as a prophet of woe

She keeps gadding abroad from the pen to the board

On all business excepting the one

That concerns her the most, like an upstarting ghost

When you deem that your worries are done.

At your elbow, when sure now your place is secure,

She is dribbling the scum and the scandal;

For however we chafe no one's credit is safe,
And like creatures that creep in your innocent sleep
To the bedside she comes with a candle.

XX.

Ordered here and there and harried, just to pay a
grudge
Owed another but miscarried, everybody's drudge,
Never stayed and still ;
Ugly in the eyes of stupid folks who cry her down
Blind as confidence or Cupid, in her homely gown
Darned with dainty skill.
Neat with careworn face she flutters through the hostile
house,
Not a word of protest utters, quiet as a mouse
But without its play ;
Worked from morn to evening, scolded, and by children
chid
With no kindness fenced and folded, even at servants'
bid,
Always in the way.
Used, abused, desired, discarded as a worn out tool,
Ridiculed for tears unguarded, never out of school
Nor one moment right ;
Pecked at in the very village by the tattler's voice,
Made a field for fun or pillage at her tyrants' choice,
Till the restless night.
Learning truths herself more bitter than the lessons
meet,
Shaped to graces fairer, fitter, at her pupils' feet,
Gifts that do outshine ;
And by daily loves and losses serving neighbours' need,
Lifted as on Christ-like crosses in her patient creed
To the peace Divine.

XXI.

Scorched by Indian skies, and pinched and pale
With the burden of the years
Writing in each line a passion tale,
Fought afar with hopes and fears ;
Moulded by the trial and denial

As of flame,
To the texture of a true heroic sort
That will somehow ere it reach the Port
Leave a name.

She has travelled long on sea and land
And been tost about the globe,
Which has felt the impress of her hand
With the trailing of her robe,
And is rich and sweeter and yet meeter
From her touch

Laid upon it like a queenly law,
Taking little from the wealth she saw,
Giving much.

Scarred by sorrow that would shadow forth
In the tightening of the mouth,
But with all the fibre of the north
Wedding sunshine of the south ;
Built to stature full and tall and fair,
Out of tempest, fire, and larger air.

XXII.

Scarlet-lipt with warm blood flowing
Full and generous and free,
As if summer prime were blowing
In some heavy-blossomed tree,
Where through queaches wild and reaches
Roam the butterfly and bee ;
Dusky-haired, though gold threads glitter
In the tangles dim and coy,
Making those deep shadows fitter
Thus to be a monarch's toy ;
Like a gipsy, who is tipsy
With the wine of human joy ;
There she stands a goddess blushing
Over with the life that runs
Madly through the bosom, flushing
With the fire of Orient suns,
At my hidden hope and chidden
Praises that she courts and shuns.
Ah, the love, that through the channels

Of her nature strong and true
Mocks at social bars and pannels,
Yet will drink its splendid due
In a passion beyond fashion—
If I only find the clue.

XXIII.

Mark how carefully adjusted and correct
Looks the frock that is entrusted to protect
This most precious piece of goods,
Hawked and higgled up and down and not worth your
half a crown,
Fashion's pride, not womanhood's!
She indeed *becomes* the clothing meant for use
And at last beneath is nothing but excuse
For a life without defence,
An apology for stuff lining mantles or a muff
And a paltry art's pretence.
Peg for hanging on the jewels cold as she,
Or the fancy work and crewels that agree
With a nature small and thin ;
All outside and labelled clear, "Going for so much a
year,"
Painted cheeks and pointed chin.
Just the product of a little lying stage,
Bubble-wise with tenure brittle of a page
Turned when downright troubles press,
With the lusts that fret and leap and if charming yet are
cheap,
Not a woman but a dress.
Admirably made to order and the price
Which the market may command,
Hovering sweetly on the border of the vice
Prudence only does withstand.

XXIV.

Bow to the maid with a mission,
Place for the mandate of heaven,
Though to society's fission
And with an earthlier leaven !
Up with the woman, and down with the man

Long such a despot and so egotistical !
Cook him alive in equality's pan,
Warmed with his own pretty fires Calvinistical !
No more election of males, but affection
Free as the breezes and broad as the sky,
Room in a boundless new world with no groundless
Barriers raised that admit not reply !
Liberty here for the slave and the chattel
Treasured and duped for a moment of joy,
Ransomed at length and all armed for the battle,
Fetterless, wise, and no longer a toy !
Rifled of jewels and trifled with long,
Treated as children to sweetmeats and song,
Cloyed with the surfeit of sugar and praise
Meant to repress her and not to upraise,
Fooled with the story of compliments hoary
Binding the wings that were spreading for flight,
Now she surprises herself and arises
Forth to the riches of honour and right.

XXV.

Millions they say she is worth, but her hat
Clearly a home-fashioned article,
Kindness to all from the king to the cat
But of mere self not a particle ;
Shabbilydrest, but the world in her breast
Carried to toil for and honour,
Just as if Christ laid upon her
Care for the least whether lost or the beast.
Homely of features but finding all creatures
Everywhere fellows and friends,
Working with God along paths that He trod
But to His merciful ends ;
Bearing the burden alone as her guerdon,
Opening her heart to the knife
Edged for the stricken who suffer and sicken,
Watching and living the life.
Ever in hidden low channels though chidden,
Runs like a river of gold
Charity wide as from Love's riven side

Out of her heart never old.
Millions they tell us she owns, but her jacket
Utters impossible things,
Gives her the look of a badly-tied packet—
Over angelical wings.

XXVI.

She is one of the masses and lost in a crowd
And just nobody still,
But yet one of God's lasses and pretty and proud—
The machine of a mill;
A mere item in numbers and reckless and young,
With some melody fresh
From her maculate slumbers that trips on her tongue
And belief in the flesh.
She is ready for Handel and takes her own part
In a concert or strife;
And, though ripe for a scandal, at times in her heart
Beats the music of life.
On her head is no bonnet or hat, but her own
Is the beautiful hair
With the sunshine upon it, and carelessly thrown
A shawl out of repair.
And her dark eyes defiant that cheerily face
The whole world without fears,
Though they look so reliant relax in soft grace
And will melt into tears.
If her language is shocking and fingers can strike
She is woman in all,
And all hell in her mocking and heaven alike
Lie beneath that red shawl.

XXVII.

See not the ill in her, only the milliner
Slaving from dawn to the night,
Turned as a flower to the light,
Crumpled and faded, by sickness invaded,
Yet with some dew and delight.
Up at her lattice she sews,
Watching her shroud as it grows
Under white fingers—no task of her lingers—

Serpentine round her it flows.
 Look at the will in her, only a milliner
 Outside the tumult and babble and whirl,
 Far from the story of man and the glory,
 Yet by the calendar nought but a girl.
 Yet in her teens and as proudly as queens
 Treasuring stores on the shelf,
 All for a living with some left for giving,
 Working and keeping herself.
 Brand not the ill in her, should the poor milliner
 Play with the morals we serve
 And from propriety swerve—
 Say, by a hair's breadth—say, by a stair's breadth ;
 Ah, she is only a drudge,
 And but a step is between heaven and hell, if unseen ;
 Leave her to God, who is Judge.

XXVIII.

Here is to the Bluestocking,
 All health and wealth and reason's dress
 And every kind of happiness,
 Except a husband and the cradle-rocking !
 She's half a folio, half imbroglio
 In that dear head with Girton pap
 So fed and fuddled, mixed and muddled,
 That life to her is *strata*, stones and bones
 And dreadful gases, lectures, laws and classes
 All jumbled up like China's map.
 And yet we love you, sweet Blue Buskin,
 With spectacles and skimpy hair,
 Not only for the spice of Ruskin—
 Your independence makes you fair.
 For you are English to your short frock's hem
 In teeth of thoughts and virtues bound in vellum,
 And to the last whorl of your cerebellum—
 Yes, though I praise you not, I can't condemn.
 And though your tameless virgin freedom
 Assumes a funny form
 And savours of the robber Edom,
 It makes a tea-cup storm ;

And we might better drop a lace or two,
Than part with *you*.

XXIX.

She is plain as York Minster,
Weather-beaten and wrinkled and grave,
Just a spinster,
But a bulwark in trouble and brave ;
Though her dress might require an apology,
And defies the commands of chronology,
A born hater of nothing but sin.
She is awkward and wrangles a bit and all angles,
And her nose may encroach on her chin ;
Yet in spite of her roughness and manifest toughness,
There's an angel within.
While you flourish in plenty and carefully nourish
The mere flesh on the loaves and the fishes,
She may pass you a solemn memorial column
Or at most with a bow and good wishes.
But in darkest extremity
When false comrades like rats are clean gone,
She would fly to the Valley Yosemite
To relieve you a bit or help on.
She looks harder than nails, but can soften
In your sorrow with sympathy deep—
Aye, and often
When we're tucked in the blankets asleep,
She will nurse by the dying and weep.

XXX.

Miss Coquette !
She is pleasant and pure
At her heart, though she still may forget
To be always devout and demure
When she could and she should and she would,
If you only had talent to stop her
And she were not a trifle improper,
Our sweet privileged pet, the delightful Coquette.
When I look at her eyebrows so arched
And her foot that keeps restlessly tripping,
I forgive her for casual slipping

And her modes and her manners unstarched ;
 For her dear little nose of celestial pose
 Is upturned to the stars as if native,
 And her mutinous lips and her fingers' red tips
 Are at times a delicious donative ;
 And though frubbles may fret,
 It is only Coquette !
 She is pretty, of course—it's her duty,—
 Though the brightness be half of her beauty ;
 And when fogeys and frumps become dismal as dumps,
 Because *she* is with lovers beset
 And goes splash from one trouble head first into double,
 I observe, " It is only Coquette ! "

XXXI.

O, she is always careful, trust her wit and sherry !
 And sometimes not unprayerful, when disease is merry
 Among the sheep and cattle, and the roots look queer
 And men begin to tattle o'er the glass of beer.
 Broad-bosomed, with square shoulder to the storm she
 stands
 And meets its blast the bolder with hard working hands,
 To issue from it brightened by each adverse part
 Though with a pocket lightened yet with stouter heart.
 She notes with watchful glances weather and the maid,
 And does not lose her chances and is always paid ;
 She knows the market matters and the proper price,
 And bread she freely scatters is no sacrifice
 Returning in its season to her profit book,
 And all the right of reason lurks in every look.
 By paring and by pinches grows the goodly pile,
 And with its waxing inches her metallic smile
 That smacks of prudent scraping and the solid hoard,
 And then the pious draping grace to bless the board !
 But still, despite her daily lust for more and more
 She can deal out as gaily from her treasure store,
 And to the starving cottage while she screws her pence
 She takes no meagre pottage if at pounds' expense ;
 And while in golden vision yet the gain mounts up,
 She gives with glad decision brimming plate and cup.

XXXII.

I know nothing so sweet as her pout,
And the pulse of her patter, the chime of her chatter—
Don't they charm away cobwebs of doubt,
And relieve the worst pinches of gout?
For the Baby is Queen in the gray and the green
Of December and June, and sets all things in tune,—
There is not a house furnished without.
For the husband, if lord of the strife,
Is yet swayed by his dutiful wife,
And the will of the mother is checked by another—
By the Baby that governs her life.
Here is She,
With that simple and innocent dimple inspiring no awe,
Fair and free,
But still breathing commandments and wreathing us
round with her law.
Can't you see, it's not *we* with our clumsier ruling
And our old legislation and impotent fooling
Or occasional sop, who are truly at top?
We are helplessly feigning,
While the Baby below is the prop
And as autocrat reigning.
We have Royalty, Peers and the Commons, the Press:
But the Baby apparelled in utter undress,
Is our fate and the State.

XXXIII.

Sparkle through the branches of the fountain,
Fragrance of the heather on the hill,
Frolic laughter where across the mountain
Carves the stream a pattern at its will
Green and glowing, with its flowing, flowing,
And the footstep that is never still;
Thus I make my picture of the English girl
Sweetly country-born and country-bred,
With her sense of guidance overhead
Shining through the tumble and the daily whirl
And the shadows lavishly outspread,
As the rift of blue among the clouds that swirl.

Bright as breezes, when the water crisps and freezes
As they bear it from the neighbouring well ;
Brave and merry, though the bird can find no berry
And forgets the song it used to tell ;
Red-lipt, so that sweetest kisses love her ;
Gray-eyed, as the English heavens above her ;
With the freedom of the wind that lights her face,
And keeps time with each imperious pace ;
Nowise daunted, howsoever taunted
By the trials of her troubled lot ;
Fresh and fervent, everybody's servant
And afraid of nothing, but a blot.

XXXIV.

The spirit of a Dorcas and the might
Of the pure matron (Rome was patron)
Who mothered heroes for the death or fight,
Meet on her comely face in one delight.
The clergywoman ! with her kindly glance
That has sweet leaven of high Heaven,
But yet can linger on the earthly dance
And in the world doth conquer circumstance.
All honour to that pleasant busy form
Which in the quiet seeks its diet,
For ever winning and for ever warm,
And on her bosom bears the alien storm.
See how she walks her humble lowly way
And thoughtful carries help and taries
In cottage gloom alike to feed and pray,
And gently guides the footstep that would stray.
She never grudges of her little store
And ready basket (none need ask it),
Or pious precepts out of sacred lore,
And leaves new light where it was night before.
Ah, I have seen a beauty on her brow,
Not on the splendid head attended
By rank and wealth, to which the myriads bow—
The blessing of the Lord : I see it now.

XXXV.

"New," but not "woman," a sign and an omen,
 Sinister, sexless, ill-famed ;
 Horribly rising from habits surprising,
 Naked, and yet unashamed !
 Turn from her, learn from her how not to trifle
 So with the sacred and sweet ;
 Mark in her, hark in her where we may stifle
 Modesty under the feet !
 Never a figleaf, tiny or big leaf
 Now for the leprosy show ;
 Nothing but crudity, nothing but nudity,
 Flaunting the blemish below !
 Masculine, muscular, coarse and crepuscular,
 Revelling still in the shades—
 Edge of impurity, saddling futurity
 Lightly with all that degrades !
 Nebulous, bibulous, crapulous crank,
 Daily dehumanised, frisky,
 Dabbling in deeps that are rotten and rank,
 Sourly unfeminine, risky !
 You are a rumpled black rosebud, a crumpled
 Scion of Sodom or Heth,
 Nameless and tameless and aimless and shameless,
 O you disease or new death !

XXXVI.

Wan and weary, with the long and dull and dreary
 Gilded season that began without a reason,
 And will end without one brief regret ;
 Lo, she trifles with the pleasant hour, and rifles
 Of their honey man and mignonette ;
 Sips her cup of Mocha coffee or affliction,
 Riseth up and lieth down with malediction
 Of the most impartial sort and sweep,
 Drawled from lazy lips and mind that has a hazy
 Unfledged notion that strong language is a potion
 Ministering to relief or sleep.
 Not unloved by two or three and not ungloved,
 Though her stays and starch are hardly taxing

And her bolts and bosom know relaxing,
Dawdling on till the next tedious joy is gone ;
Sometimes flirting, sometimes by rosewater squirting
Compliments opprest with sickly breath,
Worn and worried, but by earthquakes even unhurried,
Tickled as by butterflies to death.
Bored and flattered with amusements, freely scattered
And as brightly, on her passage daily, nightly ;
Seizing moments' rapture as they fly,
In her fated eyes she keeps unsoothed, unsated,
All the langours of Eternity.

XXXVII.

Brown as sun and wind can make her,
Not uncomely, not unmeet
For the homely tasks that take her
Here and there with mind discreet ;
With the pottage of the cottage
And the endless conquered care
Waxing stronger, in the longer
Stress of strife and frugal fare.
Motherly, a drudge, big-breasted
And with equal thews and skill,
While the babies unarrested
Yet keep adding to the bill.
All a tragedy's emotion,
All a tigress's devotion
Lurking under the plain gown,
And below the soil and grimmer
Seams a semblance like the glimmer
Coming from a martyr's crown ;
Rough and rude as Nature nude,
Shaped and shaken by the winter's
Frost and storm to sturdy form,
While mere buffets break as splinters
On resolve ; in act and face,
Tossed and tumbled to wild grace.

XXXVIII.

With book in hand, and on her guarded face
The ten commandments keeping down the lace

And carnal ribbons with their worldly ties
That need the fetters of phylacteries,
She seeks the early service ; at the feast
Always the foremost quite, nor yet the least
In rapt responses chanted to the Throne
Besieged by murmurs of her monotone,
Like faint sweet incense rising clear and calm ;
With dim suggestions of the crown and palm,
Above a cross that has a doubtful hue
And smacks of pasteboard under skies too blue
For heavens outside her fancy. Matin's bell
Brings her grave legal step, and knows her well ;
And never, never, did she wreak the wrong
Of absence from the joys of Evensong,
With priestly robes and rites not all revealed
To her monastic gaze, nor yet concealed,
And genuflexions dear to the poor flesh
Which asks abasement if it sins afresh.
She lives within a shrine of painted glass,
Through which the earth and all its glories pass
And give her what she knows of human things—
Blurred and distorted by fair shadowings.

XXXIX.

Fair—yes, fair
With the scarlet scorn upon her lips,
And her golden hair
Proud and properly arranged—
Not a thread estranged ;
Words that can and do at seasons fall as whips.
Tall and queenly
With the cultured look,
Like some blazened book
Of a gentle and heroic page,
Which has travelled down serenely
Centuries of sword and song,
And has gathered up in this last age
All its goodly heritage.
Faultless in the rich attire,
Conscious of her rank

And the awful blank
Stretched between the mob and her calm crowned desire ;
Holding out the sceptre now and then
To a favoured few,
Suffered to ascend the starry stair
Just a step or two within her courtly ken ;
If from that diviner bloom and dew,
She stoops down awhile to lower air.

XL.

Cold as the charity that with the purse
Begins and ends, doled out so much a day,
And has no part in heart or generous usage
Rooted in love and that large sympathy,
Which marries class to class and builds a bridge
Whereby the humblest may pass into peace
And in his measure taste delight ; a thing
Of starch and stays, conventionalities
And parsimonious breath that in mid-sunshine
Withdraws the welcome and damps down the fires.
Ashamed of Nature and its naked bliss
And innocences of stark healthy life
Where passion is all purity ; afraid
Of letting go the hand that holds the rule
And rigid safeguards of correct cast-iron.
She dares not ever to be quite herself
And ties her feelings to the forms she knows,
The apron-strings of sour authority ;
But still is others' mask, her priest, her wet-nurse,
Reflected in the tepid shallowness
Which is her soul and whole. No liberal blast
Beats on her hide-bound platitudes of creed,
Or ruffles with its glorious challenge once
Her calculated loves and pieties.

XLI.

Under the gas, without credit or class,
Reckless in wrong,
Haunted by evil and taunted by pride,
Slinking along ;
Yet with the shadow of shame at her side

Always contemning, always condemning
Her in her heart with the judgment that drags
Down to the darkness at length—if it lags.
Pretty enough for a kiss
Or the gloves
That your purse would not miss,
But whom nobody loves ;
Friend of an hour, fair as a flower
With the sentence upon it,
Good for a jest—with too open a breast,
But not worth a bonnet.
Ah, on the pavement
She finds her one home and her business and plot,
And the life that is not—
Venal enslavement ;
Though beneath brass and the reek of stale wine,
While she is powdered and painted and tainted
Fresh for her lot,
Still is the spark of a splendour divine.

XLII.

Beautiful thing, hiding the sting
Left by the sneer in the bosom that rankles,
Crippled and yet with the neatest of ankles,
Sweet as a lark and as ready to sing ;
Ay, and as soaring
Upward, adoring
Love that has wried and disfigured her frame,
Letting the shame
Darken a life which is guiltless of blame.
O from the eyes and pure lips of red coral
Grace that is moral,
Grace that is power
Bursts into splendour and breaks into flower.
Broad is the forehead, and brilliant the glance
Whispering treasures of secret romance,
Eager to ope the great tideways of hope
Armed for adventure and fired to advance.
Beautiful still under the ill
Clouding her sky,

Shutting her in to infirmity's mesh,
Though with the thoughts that as eagles do fly
Far from the bounds of imprisoning flesh,
Straight to the glorious
Silence that's God, over weakness victorious.

XLIII.

Here is brown Jenny,
Madcap and romp,
Only a beggar—but give her a penny
Grudged not from comfort, that *she* would think pomp !
Ragged she is and malicious she looks,
Saucy and stained with the weather engrained,
Spurning the books
We with more civilised tastes reckon high ;
Yet at her crossing,
Yet with the tossing
But of a broom to make gentlefolks' room
Cleanly, to God she is surely as nigh,
Simpering madam
Swelling in silks, as are *you* with your purse,
Equally dear and a daughter of Adam
Under the common blue sky and the curse.
Bright with her blarney the maid of Killarney
Offers you smiles and most innocent wiles ;
But if she's rich in her glory and bloom,
Where is the broom ?
I prefer Jenny,
Towsled and tattered and naughty and spattered
Freely with mud (from which glimmers the bud)
Over all girls from Cape Cod to Kilkenny.

XLIV.

She never had a chance ; her hopeless life
Burst all unwished and blasted into being,
With every woe and foe that wickedness
For ages educated could confer,
And want with its grim heritage of crime.
Damned at the start, and with a curse foredoomed
To sin and suffering beyond reach of help,
She sucked in poison with her mother's milk

Yet had no mother ; for in lust conceived
She came into a world of hate and evil,
Stamped as the devil's own indelibly,
And herded with wild beasts and fared and fought
For just a pittance, as did they and died
Daily the death of shame insufferable
And lied and swore and marketed her body
To any bidder. Vice is meat and drink ;
She hears not once the tale of purity
Nor feels its presence and exceeding power ;
She sees no gentle love. But yet at times
There is a flutter in her breast of wings
That fain would rise, and in her ears an echo
Of distant strains and solemn symphonies
Sounding through tears and maledictions deep,
And then she sinks beneath her slough again.

XLV.

Against the darkness thrown out pure and white
She walks her lily way,
A point of hope in horror infinite
Where all are far astray.
The night around her heaves broad splashes up
Of awful inky gloom,
And though she drains alone the deadly cup
No shadow dims her bloom ;
Which seems to grow yet brighter and more fair
Among the dirt and din,
Immaculate in that mephitic air
And sweeter from the sin.
For oft those wolfish eyes that on her glare
And feel the chasm so wide,
Behold together with the cross of care
An angel at her side ;
Or even the One whom blindly we adore
Perfected by the pain,
Who went Himself a blacker way before
And gathered not one stain.
But at her presence oaths to blessings turn,
And all disarmed is hate ;

She goes, with mightier loves that in her burn,
Anointed, separate.

XLVI.

Most helpless of all helpless things,
Thou baby child,
Yet with a dower and awful power
Enjoyed by every little flower
But not by kings,
Because thy breast is undefil'd !
Ah, who shall guess
The curve thy pretty wings may take
When they forsake
Their shelter, and in fear awake
To see their own great loveliness,
And poise a moment ere they try
Their maiden strength and outward fly,
Bathed as in all Eternity ?
O whither then
Among the works and ways of men,
Wilt thou with treasure more than gold
Direct thy flight,
Or where unfold
Those charms that tremble to the light ?
Perhaps on paths that none have trod
Thy beauty waits to play a part,
To break a kingdom or a heart
Or guide a wandering soul to God.

XLVII.

A true Domestic !
When her mistress needs
Her service, smart and with an eye that heeds
The smallest blot, and in the room majestic
With company and silver at her hand ;
Then every inch a queen,
Admired when seen
As born to greatness and command.
Observe the calm and serious face,
The head
Well poised, and each quick attitude a grace,

The soft and supple tread,
And in the comprehensive eye
What dignity !
But then
When work is done and all the strain is over,
She drops the mask and gambols among men
The wildest rover,
And flings decorum to the winds ; and rude
She flits and flirts, no more a stately form,
About the kitchen in a little storm
Of quips and laughter,
Free'd from the stays of servitude
And the hereafter.

XLVIII.

In the thick of the turmoil I turn
From the business and babble and knife,
And the fires of affliction that burn
Their deep messages into my life ;
From the hateful and mean, and I lean
On the love and the prayers of my wife.
For a moment my heart,
Set apart
From the strife, feels a mystery solemn,
And the walls of a temple upstart
With the stillness of cloister and column,
In a wonder of white
Infinite.
And her saintly calm face of pure love
Looking down
From the glamour and glow of a crown
Lifts me high to her summits above ;
Out of care and the glare and the carking
Petty worries and barking
As of dogs at my heels,
To the blessing that steels.
I return to the load like a hod,
With new might and a mystical sight—
All is mingled with her and with God.

XLIX.

Omnisapient surely is this
 Funny growth,
 Half a man, half a woman, but scorning a kiss—
 Or a little of both.
 Here are Oxford and Girton boiled down
 With the " Martyrs' Memorial,"
 And the " Lady's Pictorial "
 With the cap and Academy gown ;
 To produce such a curious cult,
 And result !
 I feel nervous and Mervous and more,
 As I hearken in shadows that darken
 To the torrent of terrible lore,
 Which this monster part cherub, part chicken,
 Ladles out from her store ;
 Ah, I sicken
 At the thought of my ignorant state,
 While she carries debate
 Into regions undreamt of by me
 And horizons unbounded and blessings to be.
 Yet, it's well
 After all and I don't feel so small,
 When I note on her back in her wonderful track
 Just a fragment of yesterday's shell.

L.

English mother, with the serious blue grey eyes
 And their sober look of England's clouded skies,
 Irish women do their part
 Pouring passion and the heart
 Into all their nursing and maternal skill,
 And the joy of fancy round their cradle lies ;
 But you only have the secret more than art,
 And the will.
 It is well, to be an English mother's child
 Wrapt in folds and folds of care from buffets wild,
 Tucked in warmly safe and sound
 With her jealousy around,
 Shielded from the shadow of a fear or fall

And the evil glance or touch that had defil'd,
Cuddled to her very life and all enwound
With her all.
Oft I long to feel an English mother's breast,
In the many hours of darkness and unrest ;
And with this dull fretting pain
To be rocked awhile again,
On the sweetest pillow which to Heaven is clue ;
And when I by earthly care am overprest,
Just to see in English eyes as washed by rain
God's grey blue.

LI.

Is it daytime, darling, is it night
Under that sealed curtain where no hour is certain,
Though it's always light ?
Dost thou mark the morning with its grey adorning
Strewing pearls upon the eastern sky,
As a carpet for the sun
On his royal way to run,
In the circle of eternity ?
Is it evening, sweet, or purple dusk
Where the magic moonshine pours the waves like
noonshine
From its silver husk ?
Can'st thou catch a glimmer, when our eyes are
dimmer,
Of that vision which in splendour drops
Over the enchanted Space
Which is God's own blessed face,
On the silence of the mountain tops ?
Ah, my dearest, thou dost truly note
Ecstasies of being with a perfect seeing,
Ransomed from each mote ;
Far beyond our gazing in a Dawn amazing,
Thou dost freely range abroad and find
Ready to thy heart and hand
Glimpses none can understand
Of that glory, to which *we* are blind.

LII.

Gone the love that was a shelter
From the cruel heat,
And a comrade in the welter
Of the battle seat ;
Where sharp fears, like hostile spears,
Grimly on the bosom beat.
He is gone, alas, and on
Thou must weary for the sight
Of some friend or saving end
And the never-coming light ;
While the sun sits on the rock and rill,
And thou art a bird dismated still.
But a Husband for thee tarries,
Waiting for His hour
And the faith in Him that marries
Thee and brings new dower ;
When things die, He passes by
In the fulness of His power,
Watching for the opening door
And the timid outstretched arm,
If the life in tumbling strife
Feels His choosing and the charm ;
He is now a-wooing at thy side,
And thou art His blessed heavenly bride.

LIII.

They went down in the battle and the waves
Swept over them and she,
The beautiful and free,
Was left to water with her tears their graves ;
But yet she lived, the little only—
And yet she loved, the little lonely—
One who should rather have been taken first ;
While all her empty heart, that dwelt apart
And on itself was fed and on the dead,
Ached with an inextinguishable thirst
In its great groping blindness
For drink of human kindness.
They went down in the battle, son and sire

And mother with the rest,
All beaten, over-prest,
And she remained to nurse the secret fire ;
For simple love that did not falter
Burnt in her breast as on an altar,
Amid the hosts of darkness and of doubt ;
And incense seemed to flow from her and glow
Which made a passage sweet for her white feet
And from each action breathed its fragrance out ;
Till the wide world was debtor
For her pure life, and better.

LIV.

She is nobody, simply obscure
With a colourless mien and a mode
Which is cut in the orthodox code,
And is always discreet and demure ;
There is nothing about her, to doubt her
Proper feelings and nondescript mind,
And the baggage within and without her
Is the same common dulness and kind ;
She can show no extraction or action
That's above the old regular rut,
Nor a ghost with a story nor fraction
Of a skeleton drowned in a butt.
She is nobody, one of the crowd,
A respectable item, no more,
To be covered some day with a shroud
While the fooling goes on as before ;
There is nothing to flutter or smut her
Or suppose hers a chronicle queer,
Though she takes the society stutter
And the latest society leer ;
No one ever will kiss her or miss her
Or give less than conventional grief,
Or for spoiling a character hiss her
And despatch with regret or relief.

LV.

The ugly Duckling ! No one loves her,
No one cares



If she complains, the sheep-dog shoves her
Aside and victuals with her shares ;
But takes of course the larger section
With the best,
And growls at any weak objection
Or arrest.

And all the earth is singing, singing,
Nor heeds her trouble and the wrong,
And all the bells are ringing, ringing,
In Nature's church to evensong.
The ugly Duckling ! No one holds her
Little hand,
Or pats her freckled cheek and folds her
Safe up and snug in Babyland ;
Friends always pass her by and blessings
Miss her lot,
The cat gets kindness and caressings
She does not ;
But God is King and reigning, reigning
Above our cruel creeds in Love,
And past these mists of feigning, feigning,
He counts her beautiful above.

LVI.

By gaslit shops and shelves she passes
With ragged form and famished eyes,
And mirrored sees in magic glasses
Another earth and other skies ;
And, with the lone damp pavement stone
Her chill companion and her bread,
She feels the stark and deadly dark
With numbing fingers like the dead.
But men are laughing, women quaffing,
The cup of nectar full and deep,
While some have clothing, some have nothing,
And others only death or sleep.
Moved on she paces up and down
And hears the babble of the feast,
Or rustling of some silken gown
And envies even the fatted beast.

She wonders why her bitter cry
Still goes to Heaven and wins no help,
And deaf to need yet thousands heed
The pampered lapdog's lazy yelp.
And through the rifling night her drifting
Life vanishes in mist once more,
Beneath the scourges of the surges
That beat on earth's old burial shore.

LVII.

She is pleasant to flirt with perhaps for an hour
And perhaps for a minute or two,
But that face like an angel's can yet look as sour
As a Tartar's with murder to do.
Then she bustles and hustles
You out of the room,
And her skirt in a tempest of black
With a crisping and wisping
Suggestive of doom,
Flies afar till the boards even crack.
She has tantrums and tiffs and with *her* you must take
 them,
But I think she's as pretty as God ever makes them.
There's no humbug about her, you know what you've
 got,
And for baggage like that dearly pay ;
You will have a good meal and delightfully hot,
And a temper that goes its sweet way.
She's not painted or tainted
With folly and fluff
And indulges no vice, I am sure ;
By most pressing caressing,
No powder or stuff
Will come off—she is simple and pure.
If you don't mind the sauce and the sharpest of pepper,
She's a thoroughbred filly and beautiful stepper.

LVIII.

Most gentle and all-perfect lady,
Queen among women, yet
Preferring cloisters shy and shady—

Whom none that see forget ;
As often Nature dimly weaves
A rose, that's hidden by its leaves.
O excellent fair Dorothy,
Thy touch so tender in affliction
Is patent of nobility,
Thy breath is only benediction ;
And in thy heart, which dwells apart,
Is love that loves exceedingly.
I try to paint thee in thy glory—
But then I cannot guess
One half the wonder of the story,
Told by that Christ-likeness.
My hand is weak, my purpose fails—
And yet I see the bitter nails.
For now the veil, no vulgar pride,
Reveals when dropt the sacred stigma,
The pierced hands, the riven side,
And all the sad and sweet enigma.
For thou hast borne the cruel scorn,
And been with Jesus crucified.

LIX.

Her eyes were gates of Heaven, her mouth was praise,
And on her happy brow
Bright with the peace which doth to God upraise,
Was writ the holy vow ;
The sacred sign, so blest, benign,
To which the nations bow.
Carved out of worship seemed that humble frame,
One beautiful petition,
One blessing, like a pure embodied flame
Which held in God fruition,
And must adore for evermore
But of its own volition.
For on her heart's white altar freely burned
A love, which wholly gave
The gentle life which to its Lord returned
Through self-denial's grave ;
And in its fall recovered all,

For other souls to save.
The virtue of the Cross, which from her shed
The shine of benediction,
Made the blind world the better for her tread
And healed the worst affliction ;
At each step grew, of crimson dew,
The flower of crucifixion.

LX.

O, more than beautiful and best,
Whom none hath truly seen
In thy sweet naked glory drest,
I humbly crown thee Queen ;
But not on any earth thy throne
Nor in a clouded sky,
We build who build for thee alone,
But in Eternity ;
And if we may not ever know
The fulness of thy face,
We catch some glimpses here below
In every woman's grace.
O more than beautiful, the One
Whom all so vainly sue,
And fair and finished meet in none
Though each possess a clue ;
I mark thy presence through the land
In happy virgin fears,
The whiteness of a wedded hand,
And in a harlot's tears ;
But what thou art and whither bent
Save in the Heaven of Love
We guess not, though with pure intent
I stretch blind arms above.

SCRUBBING THE STEPS.

She was scrubbing the steps as I passed,
And she stopt for a moment and met
My inquiring,
In a look too expressively glassed
Which she pardoned because it was yet
So admiring.
O her beautiful arms were both bare,
And she carried a crown if of care—
But untiring ;
While our hands somehow mingled by chance,
And my heart began idly a dance
Of desiring.

She was scrubbing the steps—that is all—
When I ventured upon a warm touch,
Not defended ;
And I let a few compliments fall
Which were fervent at least, if not such
As intended ;
But they came in a hurry, like me,
And I had not the leisure to see
Them amended ;
And our lips got together and kist
By an act, in the morning and mist,
Soon expended.

She was scrubbing the steps, as I left
Her bright brow with a halo of joy,
But unresting ;
None the sadder because of my theft,
As if drudging were only a toy,
Not protesting.
And I could not forbear looking still
Back at beauty, that took with good will
My molesting ;
And I wished I could oftener meet,
On my business and journeys, so sweet
An arresting.

She is scrubbing the steps, as I go
Through the bustle and bother of days
Yet laborious ;
While I drift with the feverish flow
In the mire and the murmuring ways
And censorious.
For in fancy I turn to the time
When I heard that *susurrus* and chime
Not inglorious ;
And when now I plunge into the strife
She is scrubbing the steps of my life—
And victorious.

YASMEENA—MY INDIAN FATE.

Lax and lascivious,
And with tinkling feet
Set with sweet silver bells, like dying knells
Of lost souls cast on utter Space omnivious,
She gazes from the lattice down the street ;
Her supple beauty sways, as to the wind
Some soft anemone,
But holds hegemony
Above her peers, a fervid flower of Ind.
The heavy perfume from her scented hair
Catches the breath
Like odorous death,
And with her bosom's naked blossoms
She sits supreme and as a demon fair.

Her mind is littleness,
But her lusts are large
And feed upon all hearts with subtle arts
Or sport in splendid vice with virtue's brittleness,
Just as a child may toy with ocean's marge ;
A veiled tomb she swallows up the gold
Of kings in revelry,
And with pure devilry
Grows brighter like a plant from burial mould,
Enriched by every sacrifice of wealth ;

The cruel grip
Of that red lip,
Seen through its musky mantle dusky,
From fame and fortune draws its ruddy health.
Languid, libidinous.
In her sandal wood
And shadowed shame's retreat, at each quick be
Of her hot pulse, whatever we would hide in us
She reads to ravish in unwomanhood ;
Each separate ruby of her costly chain
Is but the vanity
Of some humanity,
The life of man, by her fierce passion slain.
Mad tears and sighs are mingled with the threa
That gathers tight
Her limbs of light,
In the gay glitter yet so bitter
Of that rich robe whose stitches are the dead.
I see her lazily
Couched with wanton eyes
And haunted looks as deep as doom and sleep,
That through their curtained lashes glimmer haz
As on a fallen earth might fallen skies ;
I know the storming of her lustful stress,
A hell importunate
For souls unfortunate
Trapt in the toils of her hard tenderness.
And yet I flutter to my certain fate,
Lured by desires
Like wreckers' fires,
In carnal struggling joys of juggling,
Compelled by love that is but one with hate.

THE GOSPEL OF PINK AND WHITE

O the love of a woman is mighty,
And the love of a woman is sweet ;
Though her pathway be foolish and flighty,
There is music as much in her feet.
So I murmured and knew as I kissed her,

With the passion that madly had missed her
And had feared we might never more meet.
Yes, I thought this and said when her dear fingers laid
Upon me their imprisoning bands,
That were softer than sleep and half-bold, half-afraid,
But yet almost delicious commands.
O the love of a woman divine, it is human,
Though inspired with a heavenlier plan,
In its wonder of pink and the white,
And the glamour and grace infinite—
It's the story and making of man.

O the love of a woman is splendid,
And the love of a woman is strong,
Like the tale of a truth never-ended
And an ever-beginning of song ;
As he knows who with her has once mounted
Up the steps of denial uncounted,
To the heights above hatred and wrong.
Ah, I blissfully felt as before her I knelt,
She was drawing me upward with her,
To the summit of peace where serenely she dwelt,
In the beauty that nowise can err.
O the love of a woman is given to no man
Who is squalid and creeps where he can ;
And its glory of pink and the white
Wherein God doth His love-letters write,
Is the best revelation to man.

O the love of a woman is fickle,
And the love of a woman is fire ;
For it cuts as in harvest the sickle,
And it burns with unsated desire ;
But the light of her soul which I bathed in
And the purity she was enswathed in,
Were a virginal holy attire.
Lo, above me her eye like a rain-washen sky
Shone in pity that cleansed me from cloud,
And my heart seemed to break in one conquering cry
Which had burst from its earthlier shroud.
O the love of a woman divine, it is human

Though eternity only the span,
In its gospel of pink and the white
And the visions that these do indite—
It's the joy and salvation of man.

THE BRIDE OF HEAVEN.

My face was never meant a fortune,
God put His treasure in
My heart which no one did importune,
And deeper than the skin ;
But there a blessing beyond guessing
And not for every man's caressing
Or any fool to win,
He planted meet as meadow-sweet
And sheltered fast from sin.
He watered it with pleasant tears
In trembling hopes and trustful fears
And His divinest doubt,
While with a tender hidden splendour
He compassed it about.
How could He hang a jewel fair
As woman's wondrous love,
Upon a fragile thread of hair
However bright above ?
Or in the colour of a cheek
Supremely ripe and rounded,
Till it in grace abounded,
As roseleaves with no charms to seek ?
He does not dwell on lips of scarlet,
Or look from eyes of gray and starlit.

And yet I sometimes pine for blisses
Which I have never known,
The maddening throb of maiden kisses
Though light as breezes blown ;
The shy refusing and excusing
Of wants one wishes if abusing,
And sadly missed when flown ;
Consenting coy, resisted joy,

Denied, yet all one's own.
My mouth has felt no passion thrill
Nor struggled with the amorous ill
Desired when least empowered,
Nor glowed at rapture of the capture
Which left its dew deflowered.
Men only mark the beauty's paint,
The outward bloom and pride,
While these may cloke a poison taint
And shame and death inside.
I know an angel in me dwells
With radiant form and features,
Unlike these surface creatures
Made up of poor and passing spells.
The earth must take its sordid leaven,
But I'm betrothed the Bride of Heaven.

DESIRABLE.

Dear and desirable and most admirable,
Fairest of all fair things
Without the thorn and woman-born,
Though with the angel wings !
O white and comely maiden whom tenderly I greet,
Thy mouth is honey-laden, a cup that's crimson-sweet ;
Thy round cheek's perianth is like the amaranth
And touched with gentle rose,
Nor spray upon green willow had ever such a pillow
As thy serene repose.
I know thy dainty kisses which rush to scarlet blisses
Are past my earthly count,
Who boldly ventured first to slake my human thirst
At that celestial fount.

Bright and most beautiful, delicate, dutiful
In every virgin grace
Of moulded flesh, and dewy-fresh
As dawn's young opening face !
My daring lips were foremost to marry thine, and win

The charms which I adore most and deeper than red
skin.

I will not deem that bloom shall ever know of doom
And fade as common flowers,
Or those long dusky lashes can pass to earth and ashes
With their shy shadowed bowers.
Let others leave no relic who lack thy gifts angelic,
If unto me not fair ;
Thou never canst go by, who hauntest land and sky,
And lightest all the air.

BROWN DIAMONDS.

There *are* Brown Diamonds,
And I who speak have seen and handled them ;
Yes, at Lord Briamond's,
In that tremendous crush
Like strawberries and cream, one white rose blush,
I found a beauty, quite a perfect gem—
The purest water ;
Ah, you can guess, it *was* the Merchant's daughter,
Poor little dear,
With the suspicion of a tear
Just bridled back, led as a lamb to slaughter—
Got up resplendent, and half fun, half fear.

Her first young outing—
And so she looked a victim scared and shy,
With pretty pouting ;
Alas, there's many a slip,
Between the kiss and the sweet scarlet lip !
And diamonds clearly shone, in each brown eye.
But she seemed puzzled,
As wondering if the men were really muzzled
By social rites
And took decorous bites,
Or fancying by mistake they might have guzzled
Among the dainties there such modest mites.



Yet she was pliable,
I found, when fairly introduced—and then
So undeniable,
Her charm and fortune sure ;
For she was heiress, proper and demure,
Herself, not at the mercy of a pen !
She sweetly prattled
Of protoplasm and stocks and downright tattled,
Though looking down ;
And she was gipsy brown
To her warm finger tips, and diamonds battled
With the bright lustre of her gorgeous gown.

Her hair was russet,
And, if by Röntgen's rays I could have seen,
Each seam and gusset
Would have appeared the same ;
Her glowing cheeks were truly a brown flame,
Her mouth dropt pearls of wisdom and between
A rarer jewel
Like diamonds, sometimes, and as clear and cruel.
Her graces ripe,
I tell you, were enough to wipe
Out all the image of the Siren Sewell—
I even forgot for once my precious pipe.

YVONNE.

Most beautiful, most rare,
Crowned beyond reach of care
With brighter charm of eye and arm,
Than woman ever bare.
No bud, but a white blossom
Of brow and ripened bosom,
Thou showest yet new graces
And pride is in thy paces.
O still go gladly on,
In all the magic of thy might
Woven of day and deepest night,
Yvonne.

Most delicate, most dear,
Thy face is calmly clear,
Yet the gray sky of mystery
Is shadowed forth in fear.
For in those conquering glances
Where joy superbly dances,
Lurks low another vision
As if divine derision.
For light, that never shone
Before on any human head,
Is from thy splendid pathway spread
Yvonne.

Most exquisite, most fair,
Wrought of delight and air
And every sweet, in form and feet,
And the wide world's despair.
As from the sun the noonshine,
And out of dark the moonshine,
Thou of thy glory givest
And in each rapture livest.
When lesser gifts are gone,
Thine hardly have begun to be
And gather more than art can see,
Yvonne.

Most wonderful, most white,
No thorns of petty spite
Do mar thy years above our tears,
In freshness infinite.
Though from the dazzling dimness
Surge up, at times, in grimness
Gaunt shapes and grisly shadows,
Like clouds on summer meadows.
But still walk greatly on,
And leave the earth a lovelier sheen
Where thou hast but a moment been,
Yvonne.

CLEMENCY SNOW.

Ah, I do not remember the year that she came—
Clemency Snow !
But the woods were all burning in russet and flame,
And the birds and the breezes made songs of her name—
Clemency Snow !
From her Puritan vesture white hands with the gesture
Of a queenly commanding that brooked no withstanding
Glanced out and compelled any will that rebelled,
Or disputed the conquests of Clemency Snow.
It was magic and mischief and all that was fair,
With the breath of the moorland and sweet of the air—
Clemency Snow.

But she looked so demure, and her delicate chin—
Clemency Snow !
Had the least little curve which to malice is kin,
And it testified clearly against every sin—
Clemency Snow !
While the culprit before her was made to adore her,
Feeling mere dust and ashes if wrath fell in flashes
That pointed him right from their curtain of night ;
For no evil might sojourn with Clemency Snow.
There was frost of the winter and passion of fire,
In that prudent demeanour and proper attire—
Clemency Snow.

She was gentle and yet had an adamant will—
Clemency Snow !
While she knew I was foolish and tempted by ill,
And had gone to the devil and followed him still—
Clemency Snow !
So she spoke to me plainly and argued not vainly
Of the faith that was dearer, till Heaven drew nearer ;
But the iron, that dwelt in the softness, I felt ;
And I yielded at once to pure Clemency Snow.
O she came and she saw and she conquered and went,
And I found a new spirit a treasure unspent—
Clemency Snow.

And so now when the autumn is painting the leaves,
 Clemency Snow !
 I see blessing the harvest and shining from sheaves,
 And hear whispering sweetly from corners and eaves—
 Clemency Snow !
 And her eyes of grey gleaming in visions of dreaming
 Beam with beauty and power, and lips like a flower
 Open ripe and as red, and like perfume is shed
 Words of warning and comfort from Clemency Snow.
 'Tis religion and sorcery mingled in one,
 And the promise of poems that never were done—
 Clemency Snow.

DOLLY.

Do you know my Dolly darling,
 Dolly darling,
 Like a birdie on her way
 Through the day,
 Good for nothing but to play ;
 Like a noisy little starling,
 Now upon the gabled roof
 Quite aloof,
 Now a shadow
 On the meadow,
 Always busy on the wing,
 Always ripe to romp and sing ?
 O she patters,
 And she chatters
 Up and down the oaken stair,
 Like a bird
 Or winged word
 With the sunshine in her hair ;
 And I fear, when she gets bolder
 Plumes will bud ere she is older
 From each dainty little shoulder—
 As they may,
 And she then will fly away,
 Like a starling,
 For she is my Dolly darling,
 Dolly darling.

Don't you know my darling Dolly,
 Darling Dolly
With her big eyes opened wide
 In their pride,
Which the golden tangles hide,
Dear as innocence and folly
Can make baby girly things
 Without wings,
 Who have beauty
 For their duty,
Whereto girly things are born
As its blushes for the morn?
 O she rustles
 And she bustles
In and out my study door,
 With her hands'
 Pink soft commands
Tracing figures on the floor;
Wooing me with her wee stature
Back to the pure founts of Nature,
Mirth and life's young legislature,
 Where the sweet
And the bitter mix, and meet
 Love and folly;
For she is my darling Dolly
 Darling Dolly.
Do you know my Dolly darling,
 Dolly darling,
Playmate of the birds and bees
 And the trees,
And the flowers that kiss her knees,
And the wind of winter snarling
Idly at her tiny toes,
 As she goes?
 Never college
 Gave such knowledge
As a woman child of seven
Wrought of earth and bathed in Heaven.
 O the graces
 Of her paces

In a music more than art,
 Past the years
 And true as tears
Echo on and through my heart ;
When the red rose hangs its jewel
On the rose bush, when the fuel
Fights the bitter frost and cruel
 Tender snow,
When the winds to battle blow
 And keep snarling ;
For she is my Dolly darling,
 Dolly darling.

Don't you know my darling Dolly,
 Darling Dolly,
With her wise and serious looks
 As of books,
And with babble like a brook's—
Lips like berries of the holly
Blushing, while she metes with laws
 Stars and straws ;
 Lightly making,
 Lightly breaking
Worlds or trifles at her will,
Calm in her omniscient skill ?
 Still untiring,
 Still desiring
Moons and mushrooms of a night,
 Ruling all
 Who come at call
With a sceptre more than might.
As a nun who wears a wimple,
She can look as sad and simple
Though the cheeks do laugh and dimple,
 And the pout
Of the lips that crimson out,
 Flame like holly ;
For she is my darling Dolly,
 Darling Dolly.

BABY BUTTERCUP.

When the flowers of Spring came up
Came the Baby Buttercup,
 Yellow-haired,
 With rosy-paired
Lips that laughed in utter bliss,
And seemed asking for a kiss—
 For a kiss
 That none would miss,
Meant to make the sad life sweeter
 And completer ;
Each eye was a blue abyss,
 Dew and love,
 From founts above,
Touched with something indiscreeter—
 Lowly fire
 Of earth desire,
For a mortal not unmeeter.
All a flower, and all a girl—
 In a whirl,
All of madness, mirth, and tears
Less of sorrow than of joys,
As if ills were idle toys,
And she only played at fears.
When the flowers in Spring came up,
Primroses and never-still
Wind-blooms and the daffodil,
Came the Baby Buttercup,
 Buttercup.

Never since the world began,
Or the universe, it may be,
 Was a Baby
So divine as Gwenllïan,
 And delicious
In her fashion, as of flame,
With her big and unsuspecting
Eyes, that ever glowed and glanced,
And with each new feeling danced ;

Whom the Daisies gave the name,
When with her they blossomed up,
 Buttercup.
For her hair was bright and yellow,
 Soft and fine,
 And just a fellow
To the pretty celandine,
 And the flower
Wherein butterflies and bees,
Tired of holly-hocks like trees,
As within a golden bower,
 Love to sup;
Which is the true Buttercup,
 Buttercup.

At her birth
All took up the happy tale
In one harmony of mirth,
From the violet in the vale
To the early nightingale,
And in music put a girth
Round her little world; the thorn
Bloomed, when Gwenllian was born.
 Yes, the trees
Romped and rustled with the breeze,
And the branches clapt their hands
 Through the lands,
And the millstream like a boy
Leapt and shouted in its joy;
 And the birds,
In the ivy and the covers,
 Low like lovers,
Talked and talked as wingèd words,
 Winged words,
 The pretty Birds!
And the flowers in mossy dells,
Where the fairies wove their spells
And in pleasant swoons and swells
 Chanted dim
 Their evening hymn,

Rang their bells
And rang their bells.
While the dead leaves growing crisper
In a sudden wave of life,
With a wandering gust at strife,
Sent a whisper
Through and through the garden ground,
While they flew and frolicked round.
Leaves and buds and feathered things
Laughed aloud, or shook their wings
As at morn ;
And the Fairies in their rings
Danced, because a Babe was born—
Babe was born.
And, ah, the Owl,
The great flapping flopping Owl,
The white staring barndoor Owl
On the prow,
Hungry and prepared to sup,
Hooted hoarsely, " Who are you ?"
And then answered, " How d'you do ?
Buttercup,
Sweet Buttercup ? "
And just like a floating cloud
Or the shadow of a shroud
Through the leaves,
And the overhanging eaves
Of the oak, in silent state,
Passed into the belfry tower
As the hour
Struck, to tell his solemn mate.
And the mite
Speedwell to the aconite
Murmured, " One of us at length
Has attained to human power,
Though a flower,
With the dower
Of our weakness and our strength."
And they bowed their tiny heads
On their beds,

As at sunset they must do ;
And the cowslip nodded too,
Nodded too.

Gwenllian grew with the flowers,
Like the flowers,
Thriving in the sun and dew
And each day some graces new
With the showers
Showed their charms—
Redder lips and rounder arms,
Hair that with the breezes blew
Brighter, yellower ;
And her baby talk waxed mellow,
When she woke into a queen
With the sheen
And the circumstance of courts,
Not despising spoils or sports,
And in ruling waxed adept
With her sceptre.
She became a rose in June
Fresh and fragrant,
With a vagrant
Love of being lost in corners,
While she changed her kingdom's tune
To the tearful strains of mourners—
Daily lost
And daily found,
Where she crost
Forbidden ground.
In the most delicious poses
Sleeping with the scent of roses ;
When with laughter she leapt up,
Quite a queen
In royal sheen,
As if she had never been
Aught but proper Buttercup,
Buttercup.
When she walked
One little pace,

When she talked
 With simple grace
 Just the first one little word,
 Most articulately spoken,
 And the infant spell was broken,
 None before had ever heard—
 None before had seen a token
 Of such dowers
 And such powers
 As like flowers
 (Only in her second year,
 And with really scarce a tear)
 In the summer time came up
 With the Baby Buttercup—
 Buttercup.

Presently she thought of marriage
 And the husband made for *her*
 And the prince she would prefer,
 With a carriage
 Made of glass
 Such as came with Cinderella,
 Drawn by some dear patient ass,
 Not forgetting the umbrella.
 And when throned upon the grass
 Sweet and lazy
 With the daisy
 And her tresses all of gold,
 While her subjects young and old
 Brought her cakes on which to sup,
 It was often hard to tell,
 Though you knew her features well
 And her spell,
 Which was the true Buttercup,
 Buttercup.

But the daisy in the grass,
 Meadow-sweet (not sweet as she),
 Wood-ruff and anemone,
 When they saw the baby pass

Growing tired of them and zealous
For new ends
And other friends,
All turned jealous.

And the passion-flower, that crept
To her window, sighed and wept
And cried "Buttercup, come down
Once again and with us sup,

Buttercup,
Dear Buttercup!"

And attired in her best gown,
Lo, the honeysuckle stept
Sad and still

Right across the window-sill
And within her chamber leapt,
Looking up

And through far-off future vistas,
Crying "Don't forget your sisters
And the flowers,
You are ours,
Buttercup,
Dear Buttercup!"

When the autumn came she fell
Sick, and lay a yellow patch
On the soft white bed and wondered
Why she was so very weak
And her breathing had a catch,
Till she hardly cared to speak,
And the old sweet ties were sundered.
So she lay

All night and day,
As in some enchanted bower,
Where she could not sleep or play;
But one night she flew away,
And recovered her lost power
And became again a flower.
In the spring she blossomed up
From the cold
Calm churchyard mould,

In a glory to behold,
And was still a Buttercup,
Buttercup.

— — —

MOLLY LOVE.

O I have a little daughter dear
Made of sunshine, flowers and dew,
And my passion deepening every year
Yet for her is always new—
Yet for her is always new ;
She is dusky-haired and fervent,
She is tender, she is true,
She is half a queen—half servant
And has eyes of Irish blue.
If you suffer that or this stress
She is most demure and grave,
She is everybody's mistress
And is everybody's slave—
And is everybody's slave.
I would gladly be her glove,
For, though very small of stature,
She has quite a royal nature
Stamped with God's own legislature ;
And her name is Molly Love,
And her name is Molly Love.

Yes, I know a little girlie sweet
As the violets in Spring,
And the patter of her pretty feet
Like the bells of marriage ring—
Like the bells of marriage ring ;
She is modest as a maiden
Of the golden times would be,
And her lips with honey laden
Are like cherries fair to see ;
And her cheeks are blushing roses
That she borrows not from art,
When the crimson flower uncloses

And reveals its bleeding heart—
And reveals its bleeding heart.
Like a vision from above
She brings happiness, and laughter
That awakes the old oak rafter,
And will echo on hereafter ;
For her name is Molly Love,
For her name is Molly Love.

Ah, I prize my little woman child,
And I ask no better choice
Than to watch her running free and wild,
With the babble of her voice—
With the babble of her voice ;
There is grace in every movement,
There is magic in her hair,
And her pose defies improvement—
Any painter might despair ;
While the colour falls and rises
On her perfect rounded cheek,
With the sweetest of surprises
You would elsewhere idly seek—
You would elsewhere idly seek.
She goes cooing like a dove,
And no sun may brown or pimple
Her soft face's precious dimple
And the smile divinely simple ;
While her name is Molly Love,
While her name is Molly Love.

Let the other darlings have their due,
They are blessings and are blest,
But she only has the fairy clue
That can open every breast—
That can open every breast ;
She can cheat the wisest pigeon
And it answers to her call,
And her life is a religion
With its innocence in all ;
And about her breathes the scenting
Of the blossom we term bliss,

And her red lips drop relenting
If you only look a kiss—
If you only look a kiss.
When she loses hat or glove,
She will peep at me suspicious
With a pout that is delicious
And a murmur half seditious;
Though her name is Molly Love,
Though her name is Molly Love.

DAISY.

In the morning, Daisy
Always wakes me with the bliss
Of a calculated kiss,
When my thoughts are hazy
And I cannot guess the time,
And her greeting seems the chime
Of the water and the wind
In some distant land of Ind;
With the morning, fancies
Come with her and lightly play
Just a moment by the way,
Till the whole world dances.

In the evening, Daisy
Is awakened with a kiss
Which she never takes amiss,
Though so tired and lazy.
And her little crown of gold
Just assumes my fingers' mould,
As I smooth the baby head
Carried gently off to bed.
With the evening stories
Visit her, and make her room
Blossom big from all its gloom;
Into boundless glories.

In the winter, Daisy
Cuddled up before the fire

Deems the world in gray attire
Must have quite gone crazy;
Wonders why upon the eaves
Bristles ice, and all the leaves
Making such delightful bowers
Have departed with the flowers;
With the winter, shadows
Take for her surprising shapes,
And in ghostly hoods and capes
Wave on woods and meadows.

In the summer, Daisy
Wanders all among the trees
With the butterflies and bees,
Through the green and mazy
Circuits of the garden walk,
Bubbling out in baby talk,
Till the birds on every stem
Think that she belongs to them.
With the summer beauty
Of the laughing earth and skies
Pours into her face and eyes,
And to love is duty.

ENGLISH MARY.

O I love a maiden nice and neat
And she is my English Mary,
And should others charm and also cheat
She is earthly too if airy;
And if one is fickle as a flame,
Or if one is never still,
She has no deceit and is the same
In her deeds as in her will;
She has not the fancies of a prude
Nor the mischief of an elf,
She could never be a romp or rude,
She must always be herself.
And she shows her nature frank and nude—
She must always be herself.

For her eyes are English gray,
And she has the English way
Of just knowing
What is owing
And about her duties going,
As if working were to pray—
As if working were to pray.
O she is a maiden neat and nice
And without caprices airy,
If I kiss her once I kiss her twice,
For she is my English Mary.

O I love a maiden tried and true
And she is my English Mary,
Like a rosebud with a touch of rue
And with thorns that make one wary.
For she is too modest to be cheap
And too prudent to be caught,
While she looks before she takes her leap
And she never could be bought.
When her busy hands from morn to night
Are with useful tasks employed,
With the luring song, with swallow flight,
She is not to be decoyed—
With the golden cage and perch of light,
She is not to be decoyed.
For her eyes are English gray,
And she has the English way
Of just doing
Without wooing
Tasks, as doves perform their cooing,
As if working were to play—
As if working were to play.
O she is a maiden true and tried
And in wiser aspects wary,
But the kiss I ask is not denied,
For she is my English Mary.

O I love a maiden pure and strong
And she is my English Mary,
And her voice is as a summer song

Which the moods of April vary.
And she has the grace of common things
Like the blessed air and light,
With a sweet suspicion as of wings
And a gift of second sight.
And her pleasures have a sadness blent
With the beauty of their tone
And the glory of their gay intent,
Like the shadow on a throne—
But it only crowns her brave consent,
Like the shadow on a throne.
For her eyes are English gray,
And she has the English way
Of just lightly
Bearing brightly
All that comes and acting rightly,
As if working were to pray—
As if working were to pray.
O she is a maiden strong and pure
And her likings do not vary,
When I kiss her cheek she looks demure,
For she is my English Mary.
O I love a maiden free and bright
And she is my English Mary,
And her nut-brown hair is my delight
Though its charms are often chary.
She is sober, serious, she is glad,
As if January and June
Here a merry meeting somehow had
And been married to one tune.
And she always says the proper word
In the only proper style,
And is sweetly felt if yet unheard
When you cannot see her smile,
With the precious fragrance she has stirred—
When you cannot see her smile.
For her eyes are English gray,
And she has the English way
Of just rolling
And controlling

All the world, to pay her tolling ;
As if working were to play,
As if working were to play.
O she is a maiden bright and free
If her kindness can be chary,
Though she never keeps a kiss from me,
For she is my English Mary.

THE LILY CHILD.

Have you seen my pure white Lily Maid
As if carved out of snow,
With the great eyes opening half afraid
And with wonder all aglow—
With a question that abides unsaid,
And a heart of fire below ?
 She goes walking,
 She goes talking
Like a queen in royal dress,
In her lusted
Locks and clustered
Crown of girly loveliness.
She is delicate and fragile, wrought
Of the sunbeams and the air,
With a lambent fire of feeling caught
In the tangles of her hair ;
And she looks a clear incarnate thought,
Which is made for ever fair.
O her face is like a lily bell,
It is beautiful and sweet,
And her voice reflects the rippling swell
When the wind and water meet
With a message that no words can tell—
There is music in her feet.
 All the lightness
 And the brightness
Of the matin birds she takes,
And her vestures
Of their gestures

And their innocence she makes.
For she loves the dawn, and sunny things
Are the comrades of her play,
From the bee that in its blossom swings
To the rosebud in its ray,
And a glory like a garment clings
To the daughter of the day.

And she is a pure white lily gem
With the passion breaking out,
As the radiance from a floweret stem
And the little buds that pout—
Ah, it decks her like a diadem
And it wraps her round about.
Not in moonshine,
But with noonshine
Does her spirit sparkle up,
In the laughing
Light, as quaffing
Life from Nature's brimming cup.
And the earthly dress most softly lies
On her soul of secret flame,
Which escapes like prayer from her big eyes
While instinct in all her frame,
Like a vision of forgotten skies,
As she lisps the Blesséd Name.

THE PANSY MAID.

She is shy as mosses shaded
By the thickest woodland eaves,
Where the glimmering beams are braided
With the glooming of the leaves.
But she has a perfume all her own,
And a beauty to her dear ones known
That is granted but to few,
And her quiet graces shine the best
When she cradles on the evening's breast
With the twilight and the dew.
And she likes in dim recesses

With the birdies to be laid,
For the butterflies' caresses,
And she is the Pansy Maid.

She is quaint and sad and sober,
And a mingling of the May
With the sadness of October
And the glory ere decay.
O she smiles, but babbles not as much
As my other children, and her touch
Has a magic more than art ;
For it turns to kindness all it can,
Though it is not conscious of a plan,
And it trembles on the heart.
She is silent, but her fancies
Are most eloquent if staid,
For her life is all romances,
And she is the Pansy Maid.

Ah, I love to catch her dreaming
In some sheltered rosy nook,
And to mark the stories gleaming
On her face's picture book.
When she wanders through enchanted halls,
And the echoes of dim trumpet calls
To her hearing come from far,
At the challenge down the ages sent
With its troubled tidings yet unspent,
As the iron gates unbar.
Like the clouds upon a meadow
And without a word in aid,
I see feeling's every shadow,
And she is the Pansy Maid.

When her sisters think of sleeping
In the curtained evening hour,
She is wide awake and keeping
A sweet vigil with some flower.
Her dear lips of love and crimson part,
And her thoughts on some lone journey start
Which she never cares to close,

Till her rich dark locks and darker eyes
On untravelled earth, with unmapt skies,
Find a refuge in repose.
She is drowsy in the morning,
For her pleasures must be paid,
Though her dreams are her adorning,
And she is the Pansy Maid.

ANONYMA.

O the magic of the moonlight in the starry Southern
skies
Crowns her dark delicious hair,
And the passion of the midnight to her large and
languid eyes
Gives the glamour of an air,
Full of all dear dreams and fancies
And unwritten strange romances ;
Grief that as you feel its presence waves its pretty
wings and flies,
Glory of a god's despair,
Joy that ere you touch its tender dew and bloom and
beauty dies
With the flutter
Of its utter
Ravishment and ecstasies.

But I rather far would perish than betray her precious
name,
For if it were ever told
Then her grace which is her secrecy would vanish as a
flame
And her altars would turn cold
In the groves among the mountains,
And the Naiads at the fountains
Would go mourning with dishevelled locks and sweetness
not the same
And with faces gray and old ;

Ah, the wounded earth would sicken through the fibres
of her frame,
If one lover
Did discover
But the shadow of a shame.

BLIND AND BEAUTIFUL.

Sunlight never shone into her shadowed eyes
With one glimmer sweet,
And the rainbow's feet
Strode not for her once across the earth and skies ;
Nowhere did she meet
Angels coming out of the eternities ;
Not to her our vision
Opes in dim derision
Gates of pearl in Paradise, where shining shapes
Cheat with kisses cold
And enchanted gold
Dreams that think the very thorns are purple grapes.

Dearly still I loved her wandering through the night
One with laughing day,
On her shrouded way,
Darkly stretching to the unarisen light
Fingers formed to pray,
In the simple faith more beautiful than sight ;
For the lamp she kindled
Grew, though others dwindled,
On the secret sources glowing in the mind ;
By some higher law,
She it was who saw,
While I groped among mere phantoms and was blind.

Now she guides my path and I begin to see
Something of the road,
And without the load
Laid upon me once rejoice that I am free,
Nor require the goad

Of an earthly passion, when I dare to be ;
 For her pure affection
 Trusting is direction,
And I humbly follow still where'er she leads
 On the awful ice,
 Past the precipice,
Knowing not the inner gospel that she reads.

Some day with her revelation I shall gaze
 On the treasures hid
 As with coffin lid
From me by the dead world's thick distorting haze ;
 And, though fate forbid
Now, I yet shall triumph from this mocking maze ;
 With her conquering kindness
 And illumined blindness
Filled and fired I yet shall reach the farther shore,
 Where our day is night
 And the love is sight
And it is enough to tremble and adore.

LOST LOVES.

I have loved the shadow and loved the shine
 In the wealth of a woman's hair,
 For I found the humblest fair,
And the meanest glowed with a grace divine—
 With a gift like gold that no arts refine,
 And the breath of a holier air ;
 Ah, I loved them all,
 Because each was woman,
 And I felt the call
 Of the passion human ;
Though one was in silk and satin drest,
And one had but rags upon her breast.

But some had a dearer charm for me,
 And some had a sweeter face
 With a warmer white embrace ;

For they opened gates in the world to be
When the darkness fades and the discords flee,
That make earth their dwelling-place ;
They had redder lips
And daintier tresses,
And a soft eclipse
In their glad caresses ;
If this stepped out of the cottage door,
And that was queen on a castle floor.

There was Joan with the dusky tangled head,
With the ripest rarest mouth
And a passion deep as drouth,
And the pulse of the tempest in her tread
With its wings of glory about her spread
And the glamour of the South ;
There was little Fay,
Of the pretty patter,
And the light of day
In her baby chatter ;
There was Dorothy with the serious looks,
And Regina's brow like Sacred Books.

There was Rose, just a fresh-blown English maid
With gray eyes like an English morn,
And the touch of a gentle scorn
That refused and yet invited aid,
Half-bold for a while and then half-afraid—
And I sometimes felt the thorn ;
There was Una kept
In her cage of riches,
And Maude who had stepped
As from statued niches ;
And gutter Bess, true and good at core,
Who was black but comely and drank and swore.

TABLES TURNED.

"Let us play at school, dear Father," said my little girl
to me,

"I a thousand times would rather you, not I, should
pupil be ;

Come, its only just pretending," and she gaily on me
smil'd,

As she saw my face unbending, "I'll be mistress, you
the child."

So I came, and without shame I took the lowest stool ;
Now, alas ! I keep in class, and always am at school.

Dolly sits in all my places and delights in all my joys,
Or with gravest of grimaces turns my finest things to
toys.

Early comes she in the morning, big with lessons for
the day,

Pouting lips of scarlet scorning to resume the endless
play.

And I bow with patient brow to her imperious will,
Given a store of curious lore and learning humbly still.

Dolly has the softest sofa, and of course the easiest chair,
While she teaches me my "Do Fa" with a most
omniscient air.

O she grasps the whip or sceptre with her dimpled
baby hand,

As she hourly grows adept in the custom of command.
And I hear with reverent ear as her obedient tool,
Stories strange past mortal range, and always am at
school.

Dolly deals me cuffs and kisses by a sweet impartial law,
While I fathom love's abysses with a dear increasing
awe ;

She assumes my sternest manner if I ever chance to slip,
And is the most artful planner of surprises meant to trip.
But my cage of narrow stage is like a picture book,
For Dolly's eyes are azure skies and have her mother's
look.

Dolly brings to me the treasure back which I desire so
much,
And renews the nameless pleasure in each dainty tone
and touch ;
For her little chains are golden and like sunshine on me
cast,
While she wakes the blessings olden of the happy
promise past.
But I find my bondage kind, and as an Eden cool,
In this drear and desert year, and always am at school.
Dolly comes to me with cooing accents at the evening's
call,
Bent on conquests by her wooing words, at which I
ever fall ;
Gives me tender admonition, which she is convinced
will suit,
Leading surely to fruition of some sweet forbidden fruit ;
But I dare not, and I care not now to chide her wilful
choice,
For her hair is bright and fair, and then she has her
mother's voice.

WEE BABY.

Wee baby, free baby, how I sadly envy *you*,
Kicking out your feet and hands far above mere
custom's bands,
Prison pales and blinding scales, or its pert and
pinching shoe ;
I am waxing old and shy, *I* am half a century,
Not your tender crudity ;
I don't utter sounds like oaths and disport outside my
clothes,
In your fearful nudity ;
I daren't scribble on the door, *I* mayn't sprawl about
the floor.
Wee baby, free baby, spurning others' bolts and bars,
Heeding not our stays and dress in your broad
deliciousness,

Spread in state on dish and plate, or annexing my cigars ;
You can eat howe'er you will, careless what you spoil or
spill,

Checked by no propriety ;
There's no border to the deep of your appetite, save
sleep,

And your own satiety ;
I can't suck my precious thumbs, nor indulge in toes as
crumbs.

Wee baby, free baby, tyrannising over each,
Parents, servants, great and small, flying to your
faintest call

Up the stairs and over chairs—ruling all within your
reach ;

You can flout the fiercest claws of our pussy cats or
laws,

Nobody will hurt you ;
For your wildest work is grace—if you slap a Bishop's
face,

Every vice is virtue ;
I can't play the chartered fool, *I* must always be at
school.

Wee baby, free baby, if you *break* my China things,
And that lovely Dresden dog or the whole great deca-
logue,

It is just your simple trust trying so your angel wings ;
You may set the house on fire, and to your dear heart's
desire

Only be undutiful,
Still whatever is abused your worst mischiefs are
excused

As most right and beautiful ;
I daren't *crack* the slightest code in one room of my
abode.

Wee baby, free baby, everything you say is wise,
Everything you do is good openly or understood—
Running pins into our chins or fat knuckles in the eyes ;
Every blunder, every wile wakes a fond maternal smile
At your strange precocity,

Every breeze of trouble raised by those naughty hands
is praised—

Every new atrocity ;
I mayn't ruffle nurse's hair, or her temper, past repair.

Wee baby, free baby, how I envy you your bib
And your bottle, and your throne where in pride you
reign alone

Swaying hearts with pretty arts in the cradle or the
crib ;

You shall take your royal ease, break whatever you may
please—

Heads and legs and crockery ;
You shall riot yet and take toll of each delight, and make
All our rules a mockery ;

I dare not dispute your will, *I* am quite obedient still.

NO-BABY-LAND.

In my travels I arrived long, long ago

And far away,
At a country yet unplaced in maps below—

But not Cathay ;
Where the roses reddened not and life seemed deadened
Though in June,

And all being panted and the song birds chanted
Out of tune ;

Where a cloud of sadness hung above the earth,
And dimly crost

Every face of man and beast, as with the dearth
Of something lost.

Backs seemed burdened with a hidden heavy load
And bosoms grieved,

And the brows of brightness wandered from the road
Nor were relieved

By one splendid error, nor dismayed by terror
As they strayed ;

While they vainly hearkened for the hope that darkened
And delayed ;

For the foliage drooped upon the troubled tree,
And wet eyes turned
Wild with hunger for the visions that they could not see,
Although they burned.

There the people lived and lived and never died
In weary pain,
Immortality's grim curse was to them tied
An endless chain ;
So they dumbly waited in their lot belated
Through the years,
For the yearned for blessing that would fall caressing
On their ears ;
But the æons dealt with Time as if a toy
And still the same,
Though they watched for that yet unexpected joy
Which never came.

But at first I wondered how they asked for death
With every woe,
While they held that boon of everlasting breath
Their greatest foe ;
How they sought with praying for the dire decaying
Of the mould,
And for doom of martyrdom would gladly barter
Gems and gold ;
Why the shadow of a secret sorrow lay on all
And coldly threw
Blight of bondage on the country like a pall,
And deeper grew.

Then my eyes were opened and I sighed, I found
No children there,
Though I journeyed high and low and far around
And everywhere ;
For I drank no purling voices, saw no curling
Yellow hair
O'er dear foreheads dancing, nor white maidens glancing
On the stair ;
Ah, I heard no patter of the busy feet
That knew no rest,

Echoing for ever in the house or street—
And through my breast.

Nowise there might be the touch of tiny hand
In pretty scorn,
For this was the dolorous realm No-baby-land
Where none were born;
Thus no room was furnished and no life was burnished
With their play,
And the land seemed pining for that sweet refining
Childhood's way;
Yes, a blank that only this could feed and fill
In every part,
Made a desert and opprest with untold ill
Each empty heart.

DORCAS.

Her needle was the simple sword, wherewith she strove
for Him
Who was her only Light and Lord upon that pathway
dim.
But bravely did she face the foe and every evil spot,
She was too busy far to know if she had crown or not.
She never wept, she could not spare a single hour for
grief,
When all that world of cruel care surged round her for
relief.
They offered her most precious bribes to bid an angel
stay,
But heedless of their gifts and gibes she had no time for
play.
When trouble overcast her road, and fell with illness too,
She heeded not the heavier load while there was work
to do.
She took her sunshine to the shade where sisters pined
and bled,
And for the sick and suffering made her love a golden
bed.

No conqueror's sword did half so much as hers by pi
edged,
Which carried healing in its touch with heavenly glo
hedged.
She toiled when others sank in sleep, her purpose w
so large,
The deep within her called to deep—two oceans wit
out marge.
Death often passed her holy way with service smelli
sweet,
But yielded like the potter's clay beneath her steadfa
feet.
Her mighty heart could make no room for weakness
for wrong,
And turned the misery or gloom to beauty blithe as son
The tears that brooded at her heart yet never leapt
light,
Lest they might do the wrecker's part and dim another
sight.
And when her body came to lie down with its duti
gone,
Her noble spirit did not die—her life went working on

VENIT, VIDIT, VICIT!

He came across the mountain, he came across the moor
His heart was like a fountain, and if in vesture poor
Yet bubbled up with laughter and overflowed in joy
That lit the whole hereafter and made the earth its to
He chose the splendid chancing that kept his purpo
strong ;
And every step was dancing and every word a song.
Beneath him spread the city in all its palaced pride,
Nor asked he man for pity, nor turned he once aside ;
The world lay full before him, and heaven about him hur
Bright pictures to implore him, and he was free ar
strong ;

New glories on him glancing concealed the crime and
wrong,

And every step was dancing and every word a song.

Behind him now the squalor of cottage days grew dim,

And larger life through pallor of poverty to him

With golden promise pointed and opened wide its gate,

As if he were anointed for some imperial fate ;

He heard the horses prancing, he saw the glittering
throng,

And every step was dancing and every word a song.

He felt his spirit rising and equal to the hour,

And nothing was surprising when fancy burst in flower ;

It seemed familiar beauty, it seemed his native land

That called him to the duty of some well known
command ;

It was his own advancing, which he had waited long,

And every step was dancing and every word a song.

The riches were his treasure, the gallant pomp his spoil,

Attending just his pleasure—the conquering of his toil ;

He dreamed not of disaster, he would not brook a fall,

His faith was more than master of destiny and all ;

The touch of its entrancing would break the captive
thong,

And every step was dancing and every word a song.

But then he entered lightly the city and its crowd,

That yielded to him brightly as to the sun a cloud ;

The years like moments hasted in visions of a dream,

No goodly work was wasted nor hope that had a gleam ;

The real seemed but romancing, each struggle made
him strong,

And every step was dancing and every word a song.

THE PASSING OF THE PRINCE.

I am waiting, I am waiting for the Passing of the Prince,

They assured me he was near,

And I dried the rebel tear

Which was falling then and calling for his presence—
but not since ;

For they bade me and they made me hope for something
new and sweet—

That would raise my little life
From the trouble and the strife
To a splendour true and tender—if I only touched his
feet;

And his brightness lent a lightness to their voices
they spoke

In their fulness of his love,
That it lifted me above
All my meekness and the weakness and my heart
blossom broke.

For they told me he would hold me for a moment in his
arms,

And upon me look and smile
In his glory for a while,
If a lonely child gave only these white lilies' maiden
charms;

And that blessing and caressing is the one thing that
miss,

It would broaden my poor fate
To a queenlier estate,
And my petty life turn pretty with the wonder of his
kiss;

So I humbly here and dumbly through the weary hours
have stood,

Though I know I cannot see
How all-beautiful is he,
But his kindness to my blindness will be merciful and
good.

From the morning in adorning of their silk and satin
dress

I have heard the ladies go
With a rustling shine and show,
Horse and carriage to his marriage by my mean
lowliness;

And their laughter echoed after in the distance as they
drove

In their pageantry and pride,

And so near my very side
That misgiving with the living burning trust a season
 strove;
And the shadows on the meadows now I feel are grow-
 ing dim,
 But I'm hoping still, if some
 May be doubting he will come,
And the longer kept the stronger is my simple faith in
 him.
I am waiting, I am waiting for the Passing of the Prince
 Who is perfect and most fair,
 And his presence in the air
Is all fragrant, and my vagrant mood has never
 wandered since;
He is praying, he is playing, he is tired and asks for rest,
 He is feasting in his hall,
 But will quickly know my call,
And with speeding step and heeding care yet fold me to
 his breast;
If he tarry on I carry his great love that cannot lie
 Like a picture in my heart,
 As its best and dearest part—
In the darkening I am hearkening for his blessing,
 though I die.

ANGELICA.

Eyes of yellow—
Nay, soft hazel dashed with gold,
Each a pleased and perfect fellow
To the light of love untold;
Lips as mellow
With their warm delicious red,
As God makes them and man takes them
For his own and bridal bed.
Shy,
And delicate—O yes,
With each action a caress;
Beautiful and maidenly,

Made for many to implore
And for someone to adore ;
With no movement not improvement,
On the grace that went before.

Cheeks of roses
White, when sunset on them lies,
And the daintiest of noses
Turning to her native skies ;
Form with poses
Wonderful and nice and new,
Ever shifting, ever lifting
Glories in their fresh first dew.

Hair

A tawny troubled mass,
With the gleams that glint and pass
Ere you wonder why so fair ;
Shade and shine that ebb and flow,
Now in glimmer, now in glow,
And dear blushes as the flushes
On a virgin peak of snow.

Voice of utter

Sweetness, meant to govern man,
And to shake the brazen shutter
Of his most determined plan ;
Hands that flutter
Pure as kisses touched with fire,
With a quelling and compelling
Gesture that restrains desire.

Feet

That never walk but glide
As adown some singing tide,
Where the wind and water meet,
With a ripple and a rest,
All of calm and motion's zest
Mixed in marriage—theirs the carriage,
Of the true Divine and blest.

Frock of fitting

Texture, which I dare not name,
Moulded to each fine and flitting

Turn, and more like bodied flame ;
As unwitting,
It is other than a part
Of her meekness and completeness
Which need borrow nought of art.
Bust
That shelters holy things,
Broken prayers and bruised wings,
Seat of gentleness and trust ;
Cold to evil, but to good
In its depth not understood,
Likest Heaven with its leaven
Of the widest womanhood.

Life of gladness
Infinite and strong and free,
But with all the joys of sadness
Which have been and yet shall be ;
Conquering madness
And the moods of wayward will,
By her fences' innocences,
Ere they darken into ill.
Love
As light that garments *her*,
Like a silver gossamer
Spun in sacred courts above ;
Blossoming in every deed,
And at heart the secret seed
Of the duty done, a beauty
Better than the proudest creed.

FOUNTS OF LIFE.

Only a country wench, and a simple
Face full of rustic rest,
Clasping a rosy ball with a dimple—
Baby that nosed the breast.

Framed in the doorway, there she was netting
Hard at her double toil,
Feeding her tyrant, sturdily letting
Love into lips and coil.

Gold was the sunrise, gray were the arching
Heavens with wind at strife,
Down through the thirsty throat and its parching
Murmured the founts of life.

There were the rent-worth pigs as they guzzled
Wash with a noisy zest,
There was the clinging baby that nuzzled
Boldly the warm white breast.



SECTION VIII.

Thorns and Thistles.

SONGS OF THE SLUMS.

PROLOGUE.

Dives, now, hear the Songs of the Slums
And the tenants who live by their wits,
Who know nothing of reading or sums
And would send an Inspector in fits ;
Folks who live as they can,
Without purse, without plan,
At the cost of the wealthy and simple
And more fortunate neighbours,
The fat priest and the prude with her dimple,
And by other men's labours ;
They have only one notion of right,
And that not in the Bible—*it's might.*

But remember the devil is not
Quite as black as some persons may say,
And though cadgers bear many a spot
There is gold in the dirtiest clay ;
They may borrow your coat,
Or perform on your throat
For the sake of the pearls or the corals—
If you happen to struggle,
For they have funny manners and morals
And are awkward to juggle.
But just treat them with liberal sense
And they'll toast you—though at *your* expense.

If they hustle and maul you at times
Count it in with the work of the day,
Not that loafers are partial to crimes
But it's only their ignorant way ;
For somehow they must live,
And if Dives won't give
They must collar whatever comes handy
And will boil up the kettle,
Be it Dutchman or drunkard or dandy,—
They must prove they have mettle ;
If you meet them as human and kin,
They'll be tender and leave you your skin.

But they are not all idle and thieves
And not one had *your* outfit and start,
And the rogue who so lightly relieves
You of money may have a good heart ;
Some are honest and kind,
With the weather and wind,
When these offer them luck and fair chances
And the troublesome Bobbies
Let them try more respectable dances
And forsake legal hobbies ;
Though they relish no toil they can drudge,
And would more but for jury and judge.

LITTLE BOY JACK.

Waif of the gutter and child of the street
Strolling along with his bare brown feet,
Spurning the bonds of society still,
And hearing the clink of the tradesman's till
With an envious twitch at a sound so sweet,
And dodging policemen's quest with a will,
Little boy Jack
Little cares for a whack
If it comes with a casual squall in his way,
Like a pinch of the frost in the wintry weather,
For he takes all alike in the work of the day
And lumps them together.

Only a bubble on life's dark tide
Tossing about on the waters wide,—
Nowhere a friend with a helping hand
Staying his steps or wiping the brand
From the sullied brow with no wholesome pride,
And bringing the wreck at last to land—

Little boy Jack
Goes his devious track,
Cropping up, coming down, from pillar to post,
And as ripe for a revel as glad of a copper,
Rising here, rising there, as an unlaid ghost
Ever pert and improper.

Born in a cellar and bred on the tramp,
Bearing the stain of the outcast stamp,
Beaten and tumbled along the dim road
That the vagabond treads with his careless load,
Hating the sunlight and hugging the lamp,
With the constant prick of his hunger's goad,

Little boy Jack
Carries too on his back
All the vice of the pavement and curse of his kin,
As he slouches apace like a lamb to the slaughter
With a passion for tricks and a weakness for gin,
And a hatred of water.

Motherless, homeless, yet he is brave,
Never a coward and never a slave ;
Armed with a bayonet, broken in, led,
Might not *he* when a man his life-blood shed
For his country's honour he lived to save,
And die for the flag on a soldier's bed?

Little boy Jack,
With his wondrous knack
For a double share of the flouts and falls
Which to *him* have a sweet and savage wiling,
And for running his head on the iron walls,
Though he comes up smiling.

IRISH PAT.

I have only a bit of a quarrel with Pat—
 Not of course that he's dirty
 And though thirteen looks thirty
And is tattered and towzled with hair like a mat,
 Or is vicious and vagrant
 And decidedly fragrant
Of tobacco and beer and unspeakable things
 (Not in vessels and vials)
 Of his native Seven Dials
And the odour which to this queer neighbourhood
 clings ;
But my quarrel is this, and a suitable text,
That you never can guess what his trick will be next.
He is saucy, no doubt, but I love merry Pat,
 Like those nondescript creatures
 With impossible features—
Head or tail either end, perhaps dog, perhaps cat ;
 If he takes that direction,
 He will show an affection
That your Board School phenomenon never could feel—
 At a wave of your finger,
 When a hero might linger,
He would fight to the death and prove stiffer than steel ;
Though I own with regret for a copper or cup,
He would greatly prefer *just* to double you up.
A true pickle indeed is the frolicsome Pat,
 For he slips out of messes
 And law's iron caresses
To go souse in again—he thinks nothing of *that* ;
 Ah, but *he* knew no other
 Than the street as a mother,
And was tumbled about by bad teachers and tost
 From the arch to the cellar,
 Without *your* good umbrella
Or warm coat betwixt him and the rain and the frost ;
And no School Board on him had five minutes to spare,
With pianos and prate and grandmotherly care.

There are loafers and loafers, but mischievous Pat
 Has the laziest paces
 And the oddest grimaces,
Always lounging, half ignorant what he is at ;
 He reads posters and docketts,
 With his hands in his pockets
When at least they are not in some credulous friend's ;
 For he likes Eden's apple
 And prefers his Whitechapel
To Whitehall and red tape and the rubbish it sends ;
But he'd give you a "tanner" if down on your luck,
Nor deny you his bottle or orange to suck.
Under gaslight more often than sunlight roams Pat,
 With a keen eye for profit
 And what *he* may score off it
In a masterly way at your cost with his bat ;
 For he has the right ticket
 And will keep up his wicket
When the bigger knaves fall at the bowling of fate ;
 His defence is so ready
 And his batting so steady,
That his victim mistakes him at times for a mate ;
And he plays honest rogue with such infinite zest,
You forgive him the wrong and remember the jest.
Oh, his Irish blue eyes are a fortune for Pat,
 And ensure him an innings
 In the face of all sinnings,
And the fact that he never will wear his own hat ;
 While the smile just in season
 Quite forbids any reason
For suspecting *his* hand of the blow or the loss,
 And his innocent asking
 Makes the best kind of masking
When he sighs of his errors and says he is dross ;
For you cannot find fault with his manners or smile,
And his principles seem far above petty guile.
If he seems least alert I am careful with Pat,
 For his doubtful deportment
 And paraded assortment

Of preposterous airs, prove he smells out a rat ;
 Then I know he is waiting,
 And I see he is baiting
 A sly trap for the simple who want to be caught ;
 Be it only a carriage
 Or a meeting or marriage,
 Yet he is not the boy to give labour for naught ;
 He will hook something good, though he follows it far,
 If it's merely the end of a half-smoked cigar.
 If he tumbles, he falls on his feet, lucky Pat,
 And when judgment is spoken
 Still he comes off unbroken,
 For the net holding mackerel lets out the sprat ;
 And he takes the brief sentence
 With the sweetest repentance
 And deplores with a sob the indelible stain ;
 But though quitting seclusion
 With most tearful effusion,
 He returns to his haunts and bad habits again ;
 For the passion, alas, is bred deep in the bone,
 And the wicked police will not let him alone.

BLIND BART.

Poor blind Bart
 Cannot see, but his heart
 Would make up for the desolate fate—
 And the shadow that shuts out the troubles
 Of the world from his pitiful state,
 And yet doubles ;
 O therefore his lot
 Has a blankness as well as a blot ;
 Though he guesses
 God's marvellous creatures,
 And shapes for himself while he dresses
 In glory and unfallen features.
 Poor blind Bart
 Cannot steal from the mart,
 As his fellows whose eyes are their own

Though they sell them so cheap to the devil,
But to suffer at last grief unknown
 For their revel ;
 But he from the dark
Stretches vainly dim hands for one spark ;
 As he blunders
 Along his lone journey,
Strange weaving of truth and false wonders—
A knight without arms in a tourney.

Poor blind Bart
 Cannot take a boy's part
In the battle of life, yet he prays
Like a man in the neighbouring chapel ;
Where the ranter on Sunday displays
 His bright lapel
 And fearful new coat—
Where his greasy ineptitudes float ;
 But the fashion
 To *him* is as nothing,
He hears but the Tale of the Passion,
 And sees and is fed and has clothing.

Poor blind Bart
 Had a terrible start
In the race where the helpless go down,
He is only a victim of weakness ;
And he wears it indeed like a crown
 With brave meekness,
 And bows to the rod
As he gropes for his Father and God ;
 His mean living
 Prepares what is mortal
For change, and he feels no misgiving
But knocks like a child at death's portal.

DEAF DAVE.

Wee deaf Dave
From the grave
Just keeps out, and no more ;
And the death at no distance
He knew long before,
Though no hand is stretched out once to offer assistance;
He is chary of tongue,
And has never been young ;
He was born in the world quite a hundred years old,
And has now more than doubled
That babe life so troubled ;
He's always athirst and is always acold.

Wee deaf Dave
Smells the grave
Yawning close at his side,
As the heretic faggots
That chasten his pride ;
And around him and over him tumble the maggots,
He dreams in the dark
Shutting in with no spark ;
In that ominous realm where the sounds are as ghosts
Far away, and a curtain
Descends on uncertain
Existence that's haunted with shades of dead hosts.

Wee deaf Dave
Loves the grave,
And his favourite perch
Is a jolly tall tombstone
Beside the grey church,
Where he trusts soon to hear the great trumpet of
doom's tone ;
He's blasted and thin,
Only bones and the skin ;
Generations of vice have left brandings that tell
On his brow low and wrinkled,
And queer spots are sprinkled
On features that look as if hot out of hell.

Wee deaf Dave
 Is the grave
 Of a mother's young heart ;
 He encloses the ashes
 That burned out their past
 In a fury of passion and brief wicked flashes ;
 High purpose, though dim,
 Is all buried in him ;
 And he carries about him, for better or worse,
 In his pilgrimage muddy,
 Like beacon lights ruddy,
 The dreadful bequest of a homicide's curse.

CHRIS.

Fair-haired Chris
 Has forever a smile at command,
 And at this
 He is perfect, and none can withstand
 The bright face like a blessing,
 The manners caressing
 That twine all about you a beautiful wreath ;
 Yes, he beams like an angel, but what is beneath ?
 For the charms are a vagrant
 And transient breath,
 And the blossom so fragrant
 Is blossom of death.

Merry Chris
 Is a mask of a horrible shape,
 And the bliss
 He assumes hides a lecherous ape
 With unspeakable vices,
 Whom nothing suffices ;
 The jubilant laugh and the innocent look,
 Are the baits that he smears on the murderous hook ;
 For his heart's black obscurity
 Is a black tide,
 And the love and the purity
 Are just outside.

Golden Chris
Woos damnation in drink like the rest,
And the hiss
Of the serpent sounds under his jest ;
A mere baby he follows
The vilest and wallows
In garbage of sin as a sow in the mire,
And beyond his brute appetites feels no desire ;
Though he *seems* hardly seven
For ruin he's ripe,
Holds the gin palace heaven
And swears by his pipe.
And yet Chris
Could be tamed, ere the mischief is done,
By a kiss
And with kindness might surely be won ;
In that nebulous nature
God's own legislature
Is written and conscience is there not yet dead,
And the angel at bottom might still raise his head :
There is hope for the purging
His dungeon of sin
With its passionate surging,
If love would begin.

JOSH.

Poor old Josh is a miser
And scarce numbers ten,
But is yet vastly wiser
Than others though men ;
He began with a shilling he found in the street
And supposes the world is now all at his feet,
And his serious life has no room for a smile
For the shilling has grown and is quite a grand pile ;
Moses even is jealous
And envies his gold,
When he sees him so zealous
In sunshine and cold.

For old Josh loves his labour
 And carries a broom,
 And can tell a rich neighbour
 In dreariest gloom ;
 While he is so polite to sweet ladies with bags
 And to gentlemen passing with fidgety nags,
 That he soon gets the coppers to add to his store
 And keeps pegging away at his work making more :
 Ah, you don't see him tossing
 His money in play,
 But he sticks to his crossing
 And to pitches that pay.

Dear old Josh waxes bolder
 The farther he dares,
 And his brave little shoulder
 Lifts ponderous cares ;
 There's a world of anxiety crammed in that head
 Furrowed early with thought, which is coined into
 bread
 And good clothing and stuff for his wonderful stock,
 In the bank of the teapot or castaway sock ;
 While he terribly pinches
 Himself with his load,
 And proceeds but by inches
 Along his small road.

Grave old Josh takes no pleasure
 On shore or the Thames,
 And he cannot find leisure
 For larking or games ;
 On the Sunday he sleeps and believes it no sin,
 And allows but one meal because nothing comes in ;
 In the straw of a packing case, shared with odd guests,
 Like a dormouse coiled up he religiously rests ;
 Boys about him get prisoned
 And never will rise,
 He grows daily more wizened
 And wealthy and wise.

DUMB TOM.

Tom is dumb, Tom is dumb,
And his poor little mouth
May be pinched by the winter or tortured with drouth,
And his body grow numb—
But O what does it matter
To others about him, who grumble and chatter ?
Tom is tiny, you see,
And with weakness he trembles
And dreadful suspicion he never dissembles—
He looks always ready to tumble or flee ;
He is common and mean,
And forlorn and unclean.

Tom is dumb, Tom is dumb
And his desolate eyes
That refuse to meet yours have a savage surprise ;
And the dirty brown thumb,
Which he bites in sheer famine,
Would show bitter marks if you stopt to examine ;
Tom is helpless and lost,
A wan fugitive hunted
By all, and grows downward more wretched and stunted,
In sweltering heat and the fangs of the frost ;
And his brow seems the stage
Not of childhood, but age.

Tom is dumb, Tom is dumb,
And the veriest child,
Though his lips seem as if they could never have
smil'd ;

And he owns not a chum
In that infinite City,
If sometimes a dog may bestow on him pity.
Tom goes silent, a thief,
For his fingers are clever,
And passes from darkness to darkness for ever
Untaught and unknown with the gnawing of grief ;
But he's human, that blight
Only asks for more light.

Tom is dumb, Tom is dumb,
And yet clearer his voice
Tells to those who may hearken he had not a choice ;
It beseeches a crumb
Of that prodigal kindness,
Which beams upon all except him in his blindness.
Tom would keep within bounds,
And look bright with young beauty—
If properly washed and just trained to know duty,
Fed, clothed—and no more make those horrible sounds.
In that volume though sealed,
Our offence is revealed.

BRAVE LITTLE DICK.

Over the crossings and under the arch,
Waif of the weather,
Ragged and dirty and still on the march,
Blown like a feather,
Here round a corner and there down a court,
Racing one moment, then pulling up short,
Brave little Dick
Yet behaves like a brick ;
Though he lives needingly,
He bears unheedingly
Frost and the rain with sharp hunger and thirst
Always, to help his lone mother the first.
Give him a penny you never will miss
Out of your plenty,
Darling, who grudge not the colly a kiss—
You, tall and twenty ;
You, dear old lady, all muffled in furs,
Kindness itself when your kitten but purrs ;
Brave little Dick
Has too much of the stick,
While he fares drearily
Taking things cheerily,
Singing and laughing and jesting his way
Nobly, if built of a commoner clay.

Burly policeman, just turn a blind eye
On his mad capers,
Hustling and begging a bit on the sly—
Think of the Papers!
Don't be so hard on him, *you* are in weal,
He is not sure of a single half meal;
Brave little Dick
Far too often is sick,
Starving on strainingly
But uncomplainingly;
Law must not rob of repute and of pence
Weakness, and wink at rich sinners' offence.
Here is a shilling! The devil take pride,
When it is cruel!
Yours is a soil that is mainly outside,
Over a jewel;
Iron the grit and most faithful the heart,
Ready the wit and the hand with its part;
Brave like Dick,
Though your troubles come thick
All life is vanity,
And old humanity
Cleaves to us last, and when earth's glitter goes
Slippers of satin walk after brown toes.

MADCAP NED.

There was never a boy in the City of London
Quite a match for its Ned
With such hands and such head
And for doing rash things that were better left undone
He was clever at all,
At upsetting a stall
Or a gentleman proudly pursuing his travels
Unprepared for a fall
And a study of mire and the nature of gravels—
Ned was ever at home with the rackets and ravel; ;
But his bosom could feel

And was steady as steel,
 Madcap Ned,
 And he carried a kingdom of cares on his head.

 For he had a poor brother at home, a dear cripple,
 And so life for our Ned
 Was not all gingerbread,
 And he never could gorge and he never would tippie;
 For *that* suffering lot
 Kept him true to the spot,
 And he picked up odd halfpence and toiled at chance
 labours
 For the boiling the pot;
 While relieving at times his more fortunate neighbours
 Of surperfluous wealth they would waste upon tabors
 And the dance and the song,
 Which he thought clearly wrong,
 Naughty Ned,
 Who was glad of the crumbs of their gilt gingerbread.

 He could fight like the devil and did with all comers,
 But they could not beat Ned
 Though more furnished and fed,
 And his body was small and had seen but twelve
 summers;
 For he loved a good fight
 Whether foolish or right,
 And he hit out so straight and so hard from the
 shoulder
 With an Irish delight,
 While he liked a big target however much older,
 And the heaviest punishment made him the bolder;
 He was tough as Tom Sayers
 If he did not say prayers,
 Stocky Ned
 Not half clothed, not half grown, and not properly fed.

 But believe me, my friend, in a brawl or tight corner,
 I would rather have Ned
 With no weakness like dread

By my side than your sabretached swaggering scorne;
And no white kid gloved swell
With his lavender smell
Would have bottom like his and his cut-and-thrust
motion,
Or bear buffets as well;
His the muscular piety, dog-like devotion,
And a workman-like style with no cant or commotion;
To the last he is game,
Always *there* and the same
Honest Ned,
With no trouble of conscience or shadow of dread.

“CRIP” NAT.

Small “Crip” Nat goes on crutches,
And whistles a song
As he hobbles along
Quite regardless of smutches
Through rain and the mire and the down-beaten
smoke,
Brimming over with merriment and the last joke;
He’s a pure-bred albino
And horribly lame,
But he loves the casino
And any wild game;
If you want the new ditty just rattled off pat,
Merely go to Whitechapel and ask for “Crip” Nat.
Small “Crip” Nat will out-cozen
Old Moses the Jew,
Though his chattels are few
And his years not a dozen:
He is cunning incarnate, and no one can steal
Half as smartly as he or surpass in a “deal.”
Ah, his sticks are a treasure
To him in hard cash,
If you once feel their measure
You’ll know they are ash;
Though they say that in dancing he shines as in chat,
And there is nothing wrong in his legs with “Crip”
Nat.

Small "Crip" Nat has a curly
Round head, and his face
Is one comic grimace,
And whoe'er saw him surly?
His hair ev'ry morning is carefully groomed,
With a brush that as rubbish might long have been
doomed;
Though the three or four bristles
Yet left are a joy,
As he carelessly whistles,
And no vulgar toy;
And he deems no possession is finer than *that*,
Which makes almost a gentleman funny "Crip" Nat.

Small "Crip" Nat is too heedless
In judgments of life,
And declares that a wife
Is expensive and needless;
A luxury meant for the titled and rich,
Folks not bred in the gutter and born in a ditch;
While, if most eggs are addled
And doubtful is bliss,
He declines to be saddled
With bondage like this;
And he thinks that, if liberty can't turn him fat,
There is less hope in marriage—at least for "Crip"
Nat.

"CRAB" JEAN.

Jean is leggy and lanky
And cross-made and cranky,
And never content;
On her sorrowful face
Sits the sourest grimace,
And she's never unbent.
O she looks as if dug out of earth and still dusty
With darkness and stains
And the mould that remains—

Which no doubt makes her still more distempered and crusty ;

She can't help being mean,
Just because she's "Crab" Jean.

Jean is ruffled and rumpled
And crookèd and crumpled,
And whining all day ;
Fond of sitting alone
With a stick or a stone,
And not seen once to play.

For her parents both gamble and guzzle like fishes—
They throw chairs about
And then keep her without,

And when *they* have done eating she licks the bare dishes ;

So she is very lean,
Wretched hungry "Crab" Jean.

Jean is toppled and tumbled
Around, and has stumbled
Along through the years ;
Sorrow is her black bread,
And there's grey on her head
And her cup has been tears.

Ah, she is all great eyes that look harried and haunted
With watching and care,
And their pitiful stare

Turns away to dead walls as afraid to be taunted ;
And she never was clean,
But she's only "Crab" Jean.

Jean is dreary and draggles
Her limbs, as she straggles
Through darkness and strife ;
Peering out, with dim gaze,
On the hubbub and haze
Of inscrutable life.

For she feels a blind creature that frets at its muzzle,
And draws a long chain
Of oppression and pain,

And tries idly to break the still-deepening puzzle ;
O what angel will wean,
From her troubles, " Crab " Jean ?

LIZ.

Lazy Liz has a head that is fuzzy as fur
And she looks like a kitten,
If rubbed the right way she will certainly purr,
But if not you'll be bitten.
There she lies on the doorstep and basks in the sun,
In her unadorned patches ;
And though free with scratches,
I know they are mostly in innocent fun !
There she lies in her plumpness, a picture to make
For a mother to keep,
Half-awake,
Half-asleep.

Lazy Liz is an animal more than a girl,
And a thing to be cuddled
And kissed and kept far from the racket and whirl,
Wherein *we* must be huddled ;
She has no sense of time, and no talent for toil
And exists for mere slumber,
Like pure precious lumber,
Curled up by herself in a beautiful coil.
If you stroke her, those big eyes of drowsiest ken
Will with something like pain
Ope, and then
Shut again.

Lazy Liz only rouses to eat and to drink
And grows visibly fatter,
She cannot afford to lose even one wink
On a less urgent matter ;
Sometimes a stray dog has been seen on her head
And without her awaking,
Of course from mistaking
Her hair for a doormat conveniently spread ;

While the sparrows come down and alight on her
 And, completing her pose,
 Hop and peck
 At her nose.

Lazy Liz has been known to sleep twice round
 clock

And then still to be sleepy,
 In spite of four fights and the constable's knock
 Which made other folks creepy ;
 Her large-lidded eyes have the nebulous look
 As of far-away being
 And other-world seeing,
 When opening a moment their mystical book.
 And I fancy the "kitten" we pet is no clue,
 Though it's nicely put on,
 And the true
 Child is gone.

LIL.

Look at butterfly Lil,
 Never staid, never still,
 Here and there like a vision of lightning
 And fun,
 In the sun
 Or the shadow, yet equally bright'ning
 The beauties of each
 With her frolicsome reach !
 She is fairest of fair things and shamefully fickle,
 In love with herself and with any kind boy
 Who provides her a toy—
 With a tongue like a sickle.

Look at butterfly Lil
 With her volatile will,
 Always glad of new choices and changes—
 Though sick ;
 And the stick
 Even opens to her happy ranges !

She welcomes a blow,
Just because of the glow
And the exquisite sense of relief that comes after ;
She's good grit and seasoned by weather and lack,
And she takes the worst whack
With the medicine of laughter.
Look at butterfly Lil,
In the heaviest ill
With a snap of her bold grimy fingers
At pain,
Or the rain
And the cold, or the worry that lingers !
And, failing her food,
No less merry her mood ;
Who's the worse for a trifle like losing a dinner,
When mischief remains with its riches and store ?
So she troubles no more,
And does *not* grow the thinner.
Look at butterfly Lil,
In the dolorous mill
Of her lot, that looks fair but in fiction
And song,
Waxing strong
And more bright with the blasts of affliction !
To the backbone she's game,
Ever pert and the same,
Though a child with a hardness and wit beyond
guessing ;
A doubtful companion—as in the wrong stall,
And a torment to all
But yet somebody's blessing.

SISS.

Saucy Siss is a sunbeam that breaks through a cloud,
Which it softens in manifold ways
When she plays ;
And her mother, the fat apple-woman, is proud
Of the darling who brightens her days,
Though she strays ;

If the direst misfortune
Should ever importune
Her presence or path, she would turn it to gold ;
There is no one like Siss
For a game or a kiss,
There is no one as bashful and no one as bold.
Saucy Siss is arrayed in superior dress,
In a garment of wonderful hue
And light blue ;
From a hat that's all feathered and fluffy one tress
Just lets out in soft yellow a clue,
That is true ;
For the whole is good metal,
Each bud and each petal,
Each thorn that assures you she's healthy and strong
There is no one like Siss
For a game or a kiss,
There is no one more ready for sugar or song.
Saucy Siss is the joy of her household, and all
Her young playmates float down on the tide
At her side ;
She is clothed with such splendour and stands up so tall
And her petticoat flutters out wide
In its pride ;
She has jewels and spangles,
And treasures she dangles
About her, and then her deportment is grand ;
There is no one like Siss
For a game or a kiss,
There is no one whose look is like hers a command.
Saucy Siss is the plague and the blessing of each
Who is hers by affection or kin,
And steps in
To her web for the victims she knows she can reach
With the wiles she is eager to spin
As a gin ;
She seems evermore smiling
And gay and beguiling,

And coaxes out coins you determined to keep ;
There is no one like Siss
For a game or a kiss,
There is no one as regnant awake or asleep.

LOO.

Loo is daring and dusky,
And speaks in a husky
Low voice with a sinister scowl,
And her hair
Is like midnight, and she like a shadowy owl
That delights in the gloom as a cloud in the air ;
She looks common and ugly
In feature and face,
But in bed sleeping snugly
She assumes a new grace ;
I once paid her a visit, as often I do,
And there found in her place a bright angel—not Loo.

Loo is unwashed and haggard
At morning, a laggard
And grumbles to leave her poor couch ;
But at eve
She flares up like the gas, and is ready to slouch
On her mission of darkness to forage and thief ;
With her heavy lips pouted,
Her forehead all creast
And her frock furred and clouted,
She seems a wild beast ;
But in spite of her crossness she's easy to woo,
Though not easy to win in her tantrums is Loo.

Loo has marrow and muscle
And shines in a tussle,
Prepared for a blow or a scratch,
And her fist
For a child's has a vigour one hardly could match ;
Only try, and you'll see who is first to desist.

She is often quite sober
If penury calls,
And as grave as October
When the crimson leaf falls ;
If she washes her lips in beer sometimes, we too
Are as erring without the excuses of Loo.
Loo to me looks enchanted,
A maiden transplanted
From bowers where blossoms are gems
And birds sing ;
And I still see, betwixt the bare winterly stems,
All the promise and sweet resurrection of Spring ;
When her dark grey eye flashes,
I think of the palm
That shoots up from its ashes
Renewed like a psalm ;
And if Christ were to traverse the slums, I know who
Would be hid in His arms—it would be wicked Loo.

PRUE.

She has healthy round cheeks
Like the blossom of apple,
And freshness one seeks
All in vain from Whitechapel ;
The tangles that tumble about her fair head
Form a beautiful cluster,
But might want a duster
To make them the proper and perfect gold thread ;
And her eyes' merry blue,
With their beaming
And dreaming,
Light up a sweet picture of childhood called Prue.
She has pretty curved lips
Full as rosy as coral,
Though her fingers' brown tips
Deal in mud for its moral ;
Her ears are like shells polished white by the waves

Till they curl up and glisten,
Which came out to listen
And still keep the music in murmurous caves ;
But her tongue can be rue
And its twitter
Quite bitter,
If neighbours presume to impose upon Prue.

She has naked soiled feet
That seem fresh in creation,
As sprung from the street
Like a new revelation ;
While her wonderful legs are all bonny and bare
Nor asserted demurely,
And carry securely
The thoughts of a queen and a kingdom of care ;
And her general hue
To each gusset
Is russet,
Reminding of earth—for an earth-child is Prue.

She has garments of tags
And the Whitechapel vesture,
Half ribands, half rags,
But a tyrannous gesture ;
With the ways of a woman and face of a child,
And a laugh as delicious
As softly seditious,
And notions and words in a babblement wild ;
The infallible clue
To her graces'
Embraces
Is peppermint, which is resistless for Prue.

“STAR.”

When the darkness is thickest
And shadows come down,
Or the pulses beat quickest
And skies wear a frown ;

O her soft little hand falls as dew upon pain,
With a flutter,
And utter
Relief to its chain ;
And the wound of the weary forgets its old scar,
When she touches the stain—
Little "Star,"
Happy "Star."

Though her clothes are so spotted
With weather and wear,
And the burden allotted
Is heavy to bear ;
Yet she always is cheery in want, and her eyes
Have a glory
And story
Like news from the skies ;
And the prisoning care then relaxes its bar,
When her love on it lies—
Little "Star,"
Happy "Star."

If her manners are simple
Or rugged in deed,
Still the red of her dimple
Flames up at your need ;
She is ready to help you, in tune with that blush
Like the clover,
While over
You breathing a hush ;
For her springs of compassion are not very far,
And for misery gush—
Little "Star,"
Happy "Star."

Do not deem she is clever
Or learned in books,
Though the Gospel seems ever
Writ large in her looks ;
Do not ask for proprieties or pretty dress
And your lustre,
But trust her—

She will not transgress ;
 She is faithful and fond, if some blemishes mar,
 You will have to confess—
 Little "Star,"
 Happy "Star."

"DOT."

Dumpy "Dot"
 Is the smallest
 Of dear girly things,
 A bright spot
 That feels tallest
 When trying her wings ;
 And in thick London vapour,
 Where gaslights burn low
 And shops hardly show,
 She shines out like a taper—
 You could read any paper,
 By her fairy glow.

Dumpy "Dot"
 Is the brightest
 Of children I see,
 Though her lot
 Is not lightest—
 She's brisk as a bee ;
 And she gathers her honey
 From pavement and mire,
 In tattered attire
 Looking roguish and funny—
 She picks up her money
 And toys, at desire.

Dumpy "Dot"
 Is the sweetest
 Of innocent loves,
 Though she's not
 The discreetest ;
 Her voice is a dove's ;

And the chimes of her chatter
 Go straight to the heart
 With a tune more than art;
 And her feet have a patter,
 All troubles to scatter
 And comfort each smart.

Dumpy "Dot"
 Is a pickle,
 Yet no one would fret
 If the pot
 In her fickle
 Career were upset;
 But her likes have a flavour
 Of commerce and greed,
 And her business-like creed
 Gives the true city savour;
 For she won't sell one favour,
 Till properly fee'd.

— — —
 "STUMPS."

Tiny toddling
 And waddling
 Unclassified "Stumps,"
 There is no one resembling that form,
 Like a storm
 In a tea cup, excepting perhaps her doll "Dumps;"
 Though past mistress of talking
 She's 'prentice at walking,
 Explorer of pavements and dust in the street,
 With a talent for tumbles
 Devoid of all grumbles,
 Which makes her though dirty surpassingly sweet.

Pretty hustling
 And bustling
 Impertinent "Stumps"
 Goes careering full tilt with her tread
 Right ahead,

And indifferent still to the cruelest bumps ;
 What are warnings of mothers
 Or watchings of brothers,
 To babies of two who can never stop still ?
 Like a steam-engine puffing,
 And heedless of cuffing
 And counsels, she follows her own wayward will.
 Ragged, restless
 And nestless,
 Adventuring " Stumps,"
 Better known far away from her kin
 Than within
 In the home where she finds less affection than thumps ;
 In the miriest quarter,
 Like ducks in the water
 She paddles and rolls as none better can do,
 And returns from her study
 Deliciously muddy,
 Half-frockless, all fearless, with only one shoe.
 Rough and rambling
 And scrambling
 Ineffable " Stumps "—
 I often admire her at play
 On my way,
 Like a new dear wee monster just hatched with wild
 jumps ;
 She is perfectly charming,
 Though somewhat alarming
 When tacked on to my coat tails and greedy of pence ;
 But she looks brown and beautiful,
 Gaily undutiful,
 All naked nature, without one pretence.

—
 NAN.

We all know little Nan,
 We all love little Nan—
 Yes, in spite of her begging and petulant dirt
 Which has claims on our notice it should not assert ;

For if tiny she's built on a womanly plan,
Though she's often half-dressed and is wholly ungirt ;
And she's wilful and lazy

With mischievous moods,

And her notions are hazy

Of other folks' goods ;

Yet I'd give her the pick of my treasures and chattels,
To hear for five minutes how sweetly she prattles.

We all know little Nan,

We all love little Nan,

Though she comes from Whitechapel and breaths of its
air,

And has boots much too big and impossible hair,

And seems packed by mistake in too narrow a span,

For she's bonny in rags and when naughty looks fair ;

And if pert she is pleasant

And sweet as a kiss,

While her laugh is a present

That no one would miss ;

I am sure no two feet have as pretty a patter,

And wish her dear cheeks would just grow a bit fatter.

We all know little Nan,

We all love little Nan,

Though she never was properly washed since her birth,

And would seem to fine ladies a thing of no worth,

If compared with a pug or a Japanese fan ;

But to me she is precious and racy of earth ;

Though her conduct is shady

As well as her skin,

I'll bet your fine lady

Sinks deeper in sin ;

And I'd greatly prefer a soiled face with affection,

To cleanness which ends and begins in complexion.

We all know little Nan,

We all love little Nan,

With her impudent tongue and her rollicking ways

As she stumbles along in bad courses, and strays

And regardless of rights gathers all that she can—

But she has her good angel at times, when she prays ;

If she only had teaching,
 Example and love,
 She would soon be outreaching
 White wings of a dove
 To the sunlight and fly from her evil in terror ;
 She took the wrong turning at first—just in error.

TOD THE COSTER. I.

Here's the king of all costers
 That Whitechapel fosters,
 Within its dark haven of mischief and muck ;
 This he looks, this he knows,
 While his honest face glows
 As he trundles along his magnificent truck,
 With the freightage of fish
 Or the fruits that are ripe,
 And whatever you wish—
 Not forgetting his pipe ;
 Any girl would feel fluttered or pleased with a nod—
 When he passed with his cargo of treasures—from Tod.

He is cheeky and chatters,
 And sometimes he scatters
 A handful of nuts for the children about ;
 Though we cannot deny,
 If the trade goes awry,
 He is quite as prepared and as free with a clout.
 In his waistcoat of red
 And a wonderful hat,
 With his confident tread
 He looks jolly and fat.
 Be it onions or apples, a herring or cod,
 You are sure of fair dealing and measure with Tod.

He can tell a good story,
 And swears he's a Tory
 And sticks to his Church and believes in his Peer ;
 He declares there's no fight
 In the Rads., who delight
 But in prating and rob the poor man of his beer.

So he votes for the Swells,
Not the swabbers of ink,
Though when spinning his "spells"
He's a devil to drink.
But he's always well drest and respectably shod,
And as sober as you till the evening is Tod.

He is widely respected,
And might be elected
A "Member" he says, but can't yet lend a hand;
Though if troubles *should* come,
And he prophesies *some*,
Then perhaps he might make it convenient to "stand."
And I'd rather have *him*
With one notion held tight,
Than the babblers who swim
In confusion and night;
For he'd never let us bear the foreigner's rod,
And a patriot heart with his failings has Tod.

"MISTER JOHN."

He was once a small tradesman who kept a small shop,
And as good as his neighbours
Or better for labours,
But rather too fond at all times of a drop;
So the liquor ran in
And the money ran out,
And although he grew stout
Yet the business got thin;
Till at length it took wings in a desperate hurry,
And persons were kindly but still they moved on,
For they now would not worry
Their friend "Mister John."

Thus he went down the stream that was mainly of beer,
But a little too present;
And at first it seemed pleasant,

But coffers waxed empty and then things looked queer.
His companions, who helped
To distribute his gold,
Turned all distant and cold,
And the dogs even yelped.
In the end he went off with a dreadful misgiving,
For people had gone
And removed with his living,
And left just "Mister John."
And he quickly sank deeper and still deeper down,
Till he prized half an apple
Or crust in Whitechapel,
And heaven above was one horrible frown.
His old customers too,
If they happened to meet
Him, crossed over the street
And had business to do ;
While he found pity scarce, as he stood at the corner,
Where gas dimly shone,
And *that* too seemed a scorner
Of poor "Mister John."
Any night you may see him not far from the door
Of some garish beer tavern,
Which *he* thinks a cavern
Of gold and delight with a diamond floor.
If he only can kill
For a season his shame
And the thought of the blame,
He will drop lower still.
But when sober at morning he'll think with a shiver
(And newspapers con)
Of one plunge in the river,
To right "Mister John."

SNUDGE.

Here's a feather for science,
A laurel for lore,
To keep green our reliance
If drooping before ;

It is not a new fossil, no gas or a stench,
Not a boom in a planet
Or law that began it,
Nor element wrung from its chemical clench.
We have really discovered at length the lost link,
In the Whitechapel sludge ;
Only think—
It is Snudge !
With his jaws too obtrusive,
And deep-sunken eyes
Darting glances elusive
As dreading surprise ;
With his low furrowed forehead and criminal lip
Dropping down the right corner,
A mien like a mourner,
And curses that fall like the crack of a whip ;
With his shaggy black eyebrows that bristle defence,
To impose on the judge
Some pretence—
This is Snudge.
Hardly man and more monkey
And scurvied and scarr'd,
With a furtive and funky
Expression on guard ;
Mean and shrivelled and shrunk out of all human shape,
As if dried in an oven—
The dress of a sloven,
A fidgety foot that seems bent to escape ;
With a heart that respires its own poisonous breath,
And will harbour a grudge
To the death—
This is Snudge.
Growing down and yet colder
And grayer with time,
With humped nature and shoulder
Crutched easy for crime ;
With long arms and crookt fingers that open and snap
On the throat or the plunder—
The man, of course, under—

And careless of blood, with a click like a trap ;
 With a stertorous voice always wheezy, that thinks
 All morality fudge,
 As he drinks—
 This is Snudge.
 But among his foul vices
 And conduct's black blot,
 And the sin that suffices,
 There's one brighter spot ;
 For inside the tenth part of the part of a house,
 Where he herds with the steepings
 Of jail and the sweepings,
 He finds room and sneaking regard for a mouse ;
 And to this he devotes all his leisure and care
 Who for others won't budge,
 And won't spare—
 This is Snudge.

BLACK BILL.

He is rough, I allow—is Black Bill,
 And as tough
 As he's rough ;
 But he drudges away with a will,
 Though he never gets victuals enough
 For himself but is satisfied still,
 For the wife
 Who's his life ;
 Ah, he knows what are toiling and trouble
 And seems carried down stream like a bubble,
 While he suffers and works for her double,
 With the need at his breast like a knife.
 He is brave, you admit—is Black Bill,
 And as grave
 As he's brave,
 With more patience and powder than skill,
 And no tyrant could make him a slave ;
 But, silk pet, it is worries that kill ;
 Late and lone
 On the stone

Of the street, with no food perhaps tasted,
Stabbed by cold and by summer's heat basted,
He is left day and night and seems wasted
To a shadow, and worn to the bone.

He is near, we confess—is Black Bill,
And as dear
As he's near;
He's a diamond fashioned by ill,
Somewhat rugged, with trial and tear,
Ground to shape in sharp poverty's mill;
By the thorn
Of our scorn
And our floutings so splendidly taken,
To a hero of rock he is shaken,
And the ordeals only awaken
His true wealth, and his troubles adorn.

He is shy, all perceive—is Black Bill,
But as spry
As he's shy,
And determined at least his poor Jill,
If he hungers and aches and goes dry,
In his scrapings shall yet have her fill;
For her sake
He may break
A few laws, for she is his one treasure,
And of all his pursuits the one measure,
While with sadness he meets toil and pleasure—
Whether shovel or cockles and cake.

TINY TIM.

You would surely respect,
Though not of the elect,
One wee morsel turned out by the slums,
With keen ear to detect
At a distance the fifes and the drums,
And quick foot to welcome their strums;

He's a thoroughbred sample
And a grimy example
Of the stuff that the gutter can make,
And the oven of trial hard-bake;
You might feel some affection for *him*,
Tiny Tim,
Though they call him, alas, Satan's limb—
Tiny Tim.

He'd look pretty if clean,
Which he never was seen ;
He's a Whitechapel baby, you know,
But he does not act mean
If less ready for words than a blow,
And a lamb with a fleece not of snow ;
And if in for a scrimmage,
He would leave you an image
That your mother herself could not tell,
And might empty your pockets as well ;
So just spare a small copper for *him*,
Tiny Tim,
For his landmarks of duty are dim—
Tiny Tim.

But he's not very small,
As a fact not at all,
Such an infant as Hercules might
Have appeared and as tall,
Who would tackle a Bobby at sight
And emerge, too, the best from the fight ;
If he stood in his stocking—
But it seems rather shocking,
He was never in one nor a sheet—
He would stand inches over six feet ;
It were well to be friendly with *him*,
Tiny Tim,
And not seem quite so proper and prim—
Tiny Tim.

He can cut carriage wheels
On his head and his heels,
Which is more than a bishop could do

Who for *him* hardly feels,
And indeed for that matter than *you*,
Though you put all your powder in too;
And while grubby he's gritty,
And can chortle a ditty
That would set honest hair on an end,
Or a wig if to *that* you descend;
And the decalogue was not for *him*,
Tiny Tim,
His commandments are hungry and grim—
Tiny Tim.

He is fashioned of fire
And the pavement and mire,
But he has his own honour as much
As the rogues who aspire
To the credit that carries a smutch,
And then frame of religion a crutch;
Though he is a pure savage
Fain to riot and ravage,
Yet he wears not a hypocrite's smirk,
And would scorn his rough labour to shirk;
There is nothing behind hand with *him*,
Tiny Tim,
Though *your* codes might find plenty to trim—
Tiny Tim.

He is true to his class,
And not rude to a lass
And he would not strike one for a crown;
And to let a girl pass,
Just for fear she might sully her gown,
In the mud he would plump himself down;
He is fond of the gutter,
And coarse bread with no butter
Seems a good enough meal for his plan,
If he earns it at least like a man;
For sheer hunger is sweet sauce to *him*,
Tiny Tim,
And *your* squeamishness only a whim—
Tiny Tim.

He has tricks—never mind—
And is deaf, dumb, and blind,
Or whatever is likely to pay,
If he thinks you look kind
And a bobby is not in the way—
But have *you* never shammed, he might say?
He will whimper and wobble
And deplorably hobble,
Should he scent in your figure a flat,
With a pitiful story all pat;
But perhaps *you* have brought it on *him*,
Tiny Tim,
That his hat is in holes with no brim,
Tiny Tim.

Let who may be your pet,
Upon him I will bet
For the staunchness he gets from his breed,
And if famished or wet
Or half perished, all human his creed—
To be loyal to chums in their need;
He is ripe for a rally,
To help Tom or help Sally—
And especially *her*, if she calls—
Ah, I pity his foe, when he falls;
He's a trump, and there's treasure in *him*,
Tiny Tim;
You have cream, and *he* scarcely the skim,
Tiny Tim.

If you happen to trip
Through Whitechapel and slip,
He is certain to give you a chance
Of a generous tip;
If you won't—well, beware of a dance,
As he taught one poor Canon romance;
But he has English leaven
And may still squeeze in Heaven,
When your Pharisee's canting and pride
In the shadow will shiver outside;

I suspect there's a corner for *him*,
 Tiny Tim,
 When the humbugs go down he will swim,
 Tiny Tim.

TOUGH.

Tough is careful
 And prayerful
 When danger looms out,
 And the man in the street may be wanted at last,
 With the bluecoats about
 And a shadowy past ;
 Then he brushes his hat and attends to devotions,
 While torn in his breast by distracting emotions ;
 He watches the door,
 And a traitorous thrill
 If a mouse only patters or squeaks on the floor
 Makes his heart for a moment with terror stand still.
 Tough in highways
 And byways
 Is certainly seen,
 But prefers the more quiet and sheltered spot
 Where the dimness may screen
 And observers are not ;
 Then his head is set off at a different angle,
 He feels as a Briton his duty to wrangle
 And gossip and drink
 With his comrades, and those
 Who are ready at all indiscretions to wink
 And will not raise the devil they cannot compose.
 Tough has idling
 And sidling
 Approaches and ways,
 And he never goes straight if he can but go round ;
 He is restless, and stays
 A brief time in one ground ;
 If you seek him, don't dream he will keep for your orders
 The place he just trod or a mile from its borders ;



He leads, as I know,
A strange vanishing life,
And he studies the winds and the warnings that blow,
While he plunders at large and with men is at strife.

Tough is meagre
And eager
Of features and form,
With a straw in his mouth which he mumbles for bread,
While he never looks warm
And he hardly seems fed ;
Like his own London fog he for ever is shifting,
With no proper will and with circumstance drifting
From trouble to grief,
With no effort to stop,
As an outcast and sworn irrepressible thief,
To the gallows at last and the terrible Drop.

SIM.

Sim is silent and cunning of tread
And a planner
Of plots, with a manner
Of turning his head
Round behind him, as if the police are his prey,
As is usual, now were quite clear at his back,
He is furtive and shy
And hates ostentation
And sunshine, and lives in the shade
With his wife,
For his wife
Is a burglar's, and she is a burglar's wife
Sim is sleek and well groomed in his dress
And his manner
Displays his cunning
While he is in the house,
Like a dog with a stolen bone,
Blood and murder, a murderer and a thief.

He was first quite respectable
With a delectable
Birth as a butler, till fate
Turned his tune,
And one June
He made off with the jewels and plate.
Sim is surly at seasons, if grist
Or the plunder
Runs short from a blunder,
And free with his fist;
But he's never himself without something on hand,
Like a job in the country judiciously plann'd;
Ah, with danger he rises,
He dreads no surprises;
He's greatest when "cracking up cribs"
Or a life,
With his knife
In some troublesome gentleman's ribs.
Sim has one tender spot for his boy
Whom he hives for
In darkness, and strives for
With perilous joy;
And the child whom he shields, growing fairer with time,
Never dreams his rich blessings are purchased with
crime;
While the father keeps toiling
At evil, and soiling
His soul for the beautiful child;
While he spins,
Out of sins,
All the garments so dear and defil'd.

GEORGE.

There is no one exactly like versatile George
For a fight or a feast—
And he minds not the least
Which—if he may be free with his knuckles or gorge;



For a meal or a maul,
He is ready with all ;
And the lasses
Who scream " Hallelujah," and strum
On the drum,
And the tambourine, share with his glasses
The honour to warm
His big muscular form.

George is handy and lives like the rest by his wits,
Now he swaggers as groom
And carries a broom,
Or imposes on dupes with deplorable fits;
In the sunshine and shade,
He is busy with trade;
And sells matches
To youngsters who study their pipes,
But want stripes;
And his clothes are uncleanness and patches;
But dig through the dirt,
You may come to a shirt.

George has only one eye which is better than two,
And the bridge of his nose
Has a bashful repose—
The result of a conflict his folly would woo;
Though this always will pay
Pretty well in the day,
With the fiction,
Worked up with appropriate tears
And dark fears,
And served hot as a dreadful affliction;
For each artful gash,
Is worth something in cash.

O a long-headed man and sharp dealer is George,
With his mercantile eye
When to sell or to buy,
And a hand as the hammer that strikes at the forge,
Moving true with its chime
To the purpose and time,
If in tatters;

And though none is quicker than he
For a spree,
When he gives like a monarch he scatters;
He's a master in guile,
But not utterly vile.

MOSES THE JEW.

This is Moses the Jew,
And his comrades are few
Though his dollars are many and safely invested,
And he has his own house
But is warmly detested,
For he leaves not behind him a scrap for a mouse;
While he wears funny clothes
And expresses odd oaths,
And goes prying about from dust-bin to dung-heap
With the longest of noses,
And gathers all cheap;
For a sharp eye to picking has miserly Moses.

This is Moses the Jew,
Whom his Miriam knew
While she lived as his wife as the meanest of masters;
For a fresh frock to him
Was the chief of disasters,
And the milk that she purchased was bound to be skim;
Yes, a bonnet a year
He considered too dear,
And a ribbon he thought was a terrible sin;
He was dead against roses,
And counted each pin;
Ah, a cheese-paring would not be wasted with Moses.

This is Moses the Jew,
And a singular view
He presents to the Gentiles to whom he's a stranger;
And he scents a good job
As the ox does the manger,
But whatever his bargains he whines that they rob,

And procure him no gain
Beyond losses and pain;
And a dozen old hats on the top of his head
Give the queerest of poses,
He turns stones into bread,
But none ever saw sign of contentment in Moses.
This is Moses the Jew,
With his garments askew
And his beard at an awful preposterous angle;
For a farthing less cost
He will higgie and wrangle,
And (if winner) vow all his labour is lost;
But he softens his tone
Not for lucre alone,
But for widows and orphans to whom he expands
And affection discloses,
As scripture commands;
Though to every one else he is skinflint old Moses.

“THE CORPSE” (JOE).

Here's an ugly phenomenon, friends,
And “The Corpse” is his singular name,
For he gains all his money and ends
By his ghastly cadaverous frame;
Sepulchral his face and his tones
And his front like a death's head is cast,
And he lives simply just in his bones
Like a wreck of the primitive past;
He looks dug like a fossil from graves,
While each breath is a battle
And his limbs seem to rattle
Like the fetters that clank upon slaves.
In the dingiest nooks he is found
With the eyes deeply sunk in the skull,
As if strayed from some burial ground
With his gaze all so vacant and dull.
He is lean as the demon of dearth,
Through his ribs seems to whistle the gust,

He appears to arise from the earth
With a crumbling of clods and the dust.
Though he feasts by defying the laws
 Yet he never grows fatter,
 And his yellow teeth chatter
In his bloodless and terrible jaws.
For he cultivates pallor and knows
How to trade on his thinness and baulk
The most sceptical eye, till he shows
A dead body with lamp-black and chalk.
In the heat of the summer he shakes
And he shivers with merciless cold,
As he mumbles his falsehoods and makes
A grim horror—as fresh from the mould.
If unwatched, as he thinks, his gaunt cheek
 Which he pinches and taxes
 Into laughter relaxes,
When he pictures the pothouse to seek.
He is faithful, wan Joe, to his views
Of a living and honest and hard,
And the bye-ways of thieving eschews
While he plays his one skeleton card.
At the corners he lurks on the prow
For the dupe of the innocent face,
With mortality writ on his jowl
And the print of the earth-worm's embrace.
He's consumptive, rheumatic, and queer
 With suspicion of cancer,
 And all ailments that answer
And at last are converted to beer.

— — —
“SILLY” SOL.

“Silly” Sol is half-witted
And wholly distressed,
If he would be acquitted
 Of evils confest;
But as bright as a button,
A regular glutton

For mischief when chances occur in a spree :
Then the foolish expression is nowhere to see.
And he tucks up his trousers and hitches his belt
In a business-like way—
When some profit is smelt :
And his language is such as allows no delay.

“Silly” Sol is an actor
Who plays for his bread,
But his skill is compacter
Than many a head ;
And his hand is as nimble
As your dainty thumb,
Dear Una, when trimming the frock for the ball
And the stitches fly fast and the clock strikes the call :
Though his face may look vacant, he knows the right
side

Of the edge for his gain,
Where the good things abide ;
And, unless for a copper, he does not complain.

“Silly” Sol has some habits
We can’t think correct,
Keen as dogs after rabbits
When dupes least expect ;
Then he makes all the running,
With marvellous cunning,
Which an idiot not of the slums could not show
When the weather is right and the proper winds blow :
His deficiencies cover his sins as church vaults,
And the bobbies about
Are not hard on his faults ;
Though there’s daylight within, if it’s darkness without.

“Silly” Sol takes the measure
Of neighbours and all
And he knows where is treasure
In stocking or stall,
And the cracked pot with fillings
Of halfpence and shillings ;
For a simpleton really he’s clever and smart,

And if only half baked there is jam in the tart ;
For he's mad upon pussies, and makes them his cares ;
 And it is not a myth,
 That he puzzled the smith
With his "horse" shoe which Sol fancied might be a
 "mare's."

"GENTLEMAN" FRANK.

I must now introduce you to "Gentleman" Frank
 With his gaiters,
 Though he was once equal to rank
In extraction and place, my young lord, with your
 pater's ;
 He has grimly come down
 From the cake of the Classes,
 To wallow and drown
 In the mud of the Masses ;
For he erst knew refinement and lay in the lap
 Of life second to none,
 If he now lies foredone
And the prey of that Moloch the terrible Tap.
I have infinite pity for "Gentleman" Frank
 And his troubles,
 Though ages have passed since he sank
To this beggarly lot which remorse only doubles ;
 He is son of a Peer
 And was cradled in satin,
 And when maudlin with beer
 He will hiccough in Latin ;
In his crapulous talk though his glory has set,
 In his stertorous haste
 With his arm round a waist,
He is not like the others—he cannot forget.
His companions at heart respect "Gentleman" Frank
 And his tumble,
 Though he has himself but to thank
That he sticks to the street and his station is humble ;

He had fortune and health
 And the best of all chances,
 But threw away wealth
 And a life like romances ;
 He kept sinking and sinking as if he must drown,
 If arising with pain
 Just to sink once again ;
 But it's over at last for his lot—he keeps down.
 He's a gentleman still this poor " Gentleman " Frank
 In the gutter,
 If future days to him are blank
 And his past is a blot and his bread has no butter ;
 For he carries with him
 His nobility's patent,
 And though it be dim
 It is never quite latent ;
 That indelible stamp of the breeding and birth
 Never dies out in man,
 And the delicate plan
 Can't be smothered in drink and the dregs of the earth.

"THE SHADOW" (SHADRAH).

Like a mist on a mountain
 Is old Shadrach the " Shadow,"
 With his presence that darkens the place
 As he passes, the light
 Takes the sinister tinge
 Of the gloom of his former life
 Never sunlight will play
 On his mountain top.
 Never child knows the joy of a day
 For a shadow is hanging
 That is like a curse on the air
 Scatters round him a gloom of his own
 His the shadow of the day.
 And he walks on his way
 On his ravaging path of his life.

For the beautiful beam
And the happiest dream,
When he comes, turn to wanness and woes.
Not a sound do you hear,
Till as sudden as fear
He is felt but unseen at your side,
In his terrible dimness
And that ominous grimness,
Like a shark on a death-bearing tide.
As a bloodhound will follow
Over hill, under hollow,
So he tracks you with pitiless pace,
By some instinct like scent
With unswerving intent,
Though you never may once see his face—
Like the ghost of a knave,
And as still as the grave ;
Till, as time with your journey moves on,
You (who toil for his living),
With a sickly misgiving
Wake to find all your treasures are gone.
He seems only the etching
Or outlines of a sketching
That might possibly grow to a man,
If the Maker filled in
What he chose to begin
And was not quite ashamed of his plan.
But the "Shadow" is not
Without one kindly spot,
And it's not all a bramble the stem ;
For, if hardly he harrows
Men, he loves London sparrows,
And shares often his dinner with *them*.

THE "WORM" (SAUL).

Long and lanky
Is clever and keen-witted Saul,
And his Sankey

Seems ever so glib at his call ;
 He can sing,
 He does ring
 All the changes on hymns and the songs
 That are food to his Whitechapel throngs,
 To the airs which they borrow from tavern and stage,
 When with pious contortions he chooses to squirm
 With one page from the boards—from the pulpit one
 stage,

Like a worm.

Even Ethel,
 The pride of the coster and flower
 Of smug Bethel,
 Admits he has wonderful power ;
 He will raise
 With his praise
 Such a tempest of soul-searching sound,
 That the Devil himself is quite drown'd.
 Saul improves the occasion, while warning the hearts,
 Just to empty the pockets of friends who are next,
 While he wriggles with unction and sticks to his arts
 And his text.

Like a lion
 He roars at the folly and sin,
 And in Sion
 His voice thunders bolts against gin ;
 He can preach,
 He does teach
 The most beautiful sentiments pat,
 And then weeping goes round with his hat ;
 O he writhes, O he wrestles in prayer with vice
 For the weal of the flock he religiously shears,
 And surrenders his all while his dupes pay the price
 Of his tears.

At revivals
 His twistings and turns are the best,
 New arrivals
 By such are most deeply impress ;

All in black,
 With no lack
 Of good principles and a smart phrase,
 He can make the fresh tinder soon blaze.
 Neatly shaven, long-jawed and close-cropt, with his
 showers
 Of repentance he looks a church rock and as firm;
 But, if false to the core yet he doats upon flowers,
 Though the "Worm."

THE BULLY (BOB):

Bully Bob
 Likes a job
 For his biceps and muscle,
 He makes light
 Of the bloodiest tumble and tussle,
 And can fight;
 Heavy-jowled and high-cheekboned and bearded and
 black,
 Never washed, never sober, he treads but one track
 And allows but one cheer
 In the pothouse and beer;
 He thinks, in for a penny is in for a pound;
 If the reason is false, that alone is his ground.

Bully Bob
 Hates a snob,
 And he straight gives him pepper
 Left and right,
 For he loathes a mere humbug high-stepper—
 He can fight;
 With square shoulders, deep chest and his ponderous
 arms
 And a truculent look, he distinctly alarms
 Any casual friend
 Who opposes his end;
 He says, hammer and tongs are far better than play;
 That's a funny opinion, but then it's his way.

Bully Bob
 Does not rob
 With the usual sneaking,
 He has might
 And knows nothing is lost by plain speaking,
 And can fight ;
 So he does not go sidling with serpentine stealth,
 But demands and quite boldly to drink your good
 health ;
 And he will not abuse
 One who likes to refuse
 A frank offer, nor act as a commoner clown ;
 He will take what he wants, having first knocked you
 down.

Bully Bob
 Loves a mob,
 For displaying his science ;
 He is right,
 As he feels in his hands such reliance
 And can fight ;
 But for cripples he often exhibits the strength
 Of his arms, and wrong doers who measure their length
 Do not need hitting twice,
 As they find once suffice ;
 He is the champion of cripples, with all his fierce air,
 And you may not admire him—but that's your affair.

THE BUTCHER (BEN).

Butcher Ben is a killer
 Of dogs and of cats,
 And a hardened fulfiller
 Of death to all rats ;
 With a mongrel behind and a pipe in his lips
 And a hand that holds fast on the sharpest of whips,
 He strolls blear-eyed and blinking
 And slouching and slinking
 With the shiftiest glance and irresolute tread,
 And a moleskin cap stuck on the back of his head ;

As if he can't determine,
If *you* are not vermin.

Butcher Ben loves the slaughter
Of innocent beasts,
Though he has one dear daughter
He fondles and feasts ;
And if red from the torture of helpless dumb things,
He'd not ruffle her hair nor her white apron strings ;
But he goes shy and shambling
On murderous rambling,
From one court to another in quest of the food
And the sport that is bliss to his barbarous mood ;
He is cunning and cruel,
And to him pain is gruel.

Butcher Ben has indwelling
An infinite lust
Of destruction, rebelling
At kindness and trust ;
He thinks mercy is weakness and gentleness fear,
And to him any sight that looks dreadful is dear ;
And his wife undetected
Was soon vivisected,
Though devotion to him was her singular fault,
With the scalpel of savage abuse and assault ;
While his dog won the petting,
She had the forgetting.

Butcher Ben has a fashion
We do not admire,
For mere blood wakes a passion
In him none desire ;
And the tiger in all at the bottom seethes up
In his nature, as dregs from an unwashed cup ;
Though he scuttles and scrambles
To all the near shambles,
Yet he keeps a warm corner deep in his cold heart
For the daughter he spoils with a princess's part ;
" Rover " first must be reckon'd,
But *she* is a good second.

THE "DEMON" (DAN).

Though they call him the "Demon" he's mildest of men,
 With a dash
 Of politeness that sets off the wen
Of the gutter spread out like a horrible splash
 From his head to his heel,
 On his watch-chain of steel ;
And his eyes are the softest cerulean blue
 That betray not a clue
 Of his grimy possessions
Though he lives under decent society's ban
 Among grievous transgressions—
 Yet *he's* "Demon" Dan.

But this is the quintessence of Whitechapel wit
 And the slums,
 To affix a wrong name that will sit
Like false beacons, and style clever fingers all thumbs ;
 For the "Demon" is mild
 As an innocent child,
And peeps forth from his gloom and in wondering love,
 As the azure above
 From the clouds in their courses ;
Just as if a strayed infant, with never a plan,
 Gazed out on hell forces—
 Yet *he's* "Demon" Dan.

How he reached that Inferno I truly can't guess—
 It is odd ;
 For beneath his dark Whitechapel dress,
There's a heart that believes in a heaven and God—
 There's the quivering spire
 Of an upmounting fire—
There's the beating of wings of an infinite trust,
 In a desert of dust ;
 Though he knows not a letter
And subsides with strange pals in a prisoning span
 And goes clanking a fetter—
 He's *not* "Demon" Dan.

And he is fully as honest as you with his toil,
 I can vow ;
 For that dim disrespectful soil
 Has no home in his breast, if it shadows his brow ;
 For the shavings off spars
 And the ends of cigars,
 With the tags and the rags and the refuse of bones
 He collects from the stones ;
 Though he shuns soap and water
 And once heaved half a brick at mad " Hallelu " Ann,
 While he keeps the rogue's quarter—
 He's *not* " Demon " Dan.

— — —
 "SUDDEN DEATH " SAM.

" Sudden Death " is a horrible sham
 With his bulldog a brindle,
 Though his proper name really is Sam—
 He's a regular swindle ;
 For his conduct is certainly queer,
 And his diet tobacco and beer
 With a casual herring ;
 He has each heavy fault of his class,
 And sometimes is hitched on to an ass—
 Like himself sadly erring.
 Imposition for him is his breath,
 And most oddly he lives by his death.
 He would gammon the very elect—
 Even you, neighbour, *and* I
 Might be cheated by him, I suspect,
 And his mode *operandi* ;
 It does give me a positive pain
 To reveal it, but let me explain—
 It's as plain as a pimple ;
 He observes with a curious glance
 All the wayfarers yielding a chance,
 Looking out for the simple ;
 When one passes to suit his desire,
 He proceeds at his ease to expire.

For he has a fair portion of wits
And at acting is clever,
And no humbug can beat him at fits—
Though a few may endeavour ;
In a moment, to some one's distress,
He goes off like a railway express
On his back foaming, kicking,
And subsides with a gurgle and gasp,
Should he fancy your purse will unclasp
At his masterly tricking ;
If he hears then the magical sound
Of a coin, he as quickly comes round.
'Tis a shocking performance to do
You may cry, my dear madam ;
He's a hypocrite, but what are *you*
With that cunning old Adam ?
He is kind to his bulldog and ass,
Though he likes (as your husband) his glass,
But betrays none with kisses ;
He deceives, just because it s his trade,
And prefers (as you often) the shade—
What of *your* stolen blisses ?
Imposition to him is his bread,
And he only lives when he is dead.

“SATAN” HARRY.

“Satan” strolls gaily drest in the Whitechapel style
And wears gloves and a flower and elegant smile,
With his oily insidious manner,
And red neck-kerchief fragrant of grease and of guile
That goes flaming before like a banner.
He is soapy and sly
With a glass in his eye,
Weaving webs for the fly
As a spider that's spinning its thread,
Always eager to marry
And devour the poor bride for the dead—
But his true name is Harry.

Honey-wiled, with cheap jewels and sugar-plum bait,
Steeped in fraud to his finger tips well he can wait
Till the victim is charmed, if he chooses,
While the net of entanglements closes in strait
With the chance which the petulant loses ;
He is affable, smart
In the devil's best part,
And despises all heart ;
And he lives (as his lord) many lives
A wild rake and a rover,
And has wedded (they say) twenty wives
And still sighs for fresh clover.

He is craftily cruel and cloyingly sweet
On the quest for stray maidens he watches to meet,
But is carefully damnably sober,
Wide awake for his prey till she falls at his feet
As the withered leaves fall in October ;
He is ready of speech,
And can beg or beseech
With new stories for each,
And besmears them before he eats up
With his slimy addresses,
Though with venom dropt in the gold cup,
Like a serpent's caresses.

While so heartless he still has a weakness for " kids,"
Though his hands grip their spoil like the closed coffin
lids,
And in tender directions are chary,
But to Mary and Jack (if no pleasure forbids)
He is kind and loves both—but most Mary ;
He gives children his pence,
And for all his defence
Is no idle pretence ;
And for them he forsakes his foul trail
Just to fetch and to carry,
He will buy pretty toys if they ail—
Yet they call him " Old Harry."

PODGE.

Here is all alone Podge
 With his singular habits
 And face like a rabbit's,
 Determined to dodge
 Every creature that comes in his singular way—
 How he lives, where he sojourns, no person can say ;
 And it does not much matter
 To you or to me,
 Only neighbours will chatter
 And no two agree ;
 But he makes no companions, and still as a stone
 Through the day and at night he endures all alone—
 All alone,
 All alone.

Podge abides in a mist,
 He is careful of clothing
 And seems to have nothing
 To do but exist ;
 He is very particular too with his breath,
 Never speaks to a soul, and goes silent as death
 Up and down court and alley
 Seeking what he can't find ;
 Even Sue and gay Sally
 Are not to his mind ;
 He's been seen to pick quarrels with dogs for a bone,
 But he did it believing he was all alone—
 All alone,
 All alone.

Podge is never too slow,
 And the sternest disaster
 Will not drive him faster,
 If hurricanes blow ;
 At the same even pace on the same dreary round,
 Wet or dry, hot or cold, he seems fatally bound ;
 And the same dull expression
 Appears on his face,
 But it yields no confession
 The wisest can trace ;

If he talked it would be with the same level tone,
In the presence of hell, for he lives all alone—

All alone,
All alone.

Do not reckon poor Podge
Will explain if he passes
For beer in full glasses,
Where *he* loves to lodge ;
No policeman can help you, and no one has seen
Him asleep or half tipsy when others have been ;
He allows not a pleasure
Nor symptom of pain—
Not a moment of leisure,
Nor does he complain ;
In a world by himself, no geography's zone,
Deaf and dumb, blind and dead, he resides all alone—
All alone,
All alone.

BREEZY BESS.

If things ever arrive at a stress
Or a tangle,
I'll lay all my money on Bess,
Not to dangle—
To dangle ;
For while others are dreaming and dawdling about
At the lucky gold portals
Once opened to mortals,
In a trice she's within, while they dally without ;
For she tells the right moment
When it's *yes* and not *no* meant,
As her breezy young form in its bliss
Blows a kiss—
Blows a kiss.
If you speak of a matter like dress
Or a bonnet,
There is no one like practical Bess
Dead upon it—
Upon it ;

If you're dealing with feathers or ribands or some
Such mysterious question,
I'll back her suggestion
Against all, though the wisest of milliners come ;
If you go into flounces
Or trimmings, she pounces
Just on the solution desired,
As inspired—
As inspired.

If you drop by mistake in a mess
Or a scandal,
There is no one as nimble as Bess
With her candle—
Her candle,
To give light and relief at the one proper time ;
If you fall in a puddle
Or other folks' muddle,
At a simple extraction she's downright sublime ;
She's a kitten—who catches
Her, knows what are scratches,
But she purrs quite as sweetly when teased
As when pleased—
As when pleased.

If you treat her (it's needless to press)
To the candy
She loves, not ungrateful is Bess
And so handy—
So handy ;
If consulting her tastes you propose her the choice
She is partial to coffee,
And reckons that toffee
Is wholesome and excellent food for the voice.
She has thoughts about marriage
And driving a carriage,
When her coster endows the bright lass
With his ass—
With his ass.

"DOLL."

O we all are enamoured of dear little "Doll"
With her merry blue eyes and long lashes,
And flashes
Of humour, if sometimes she screams like poor Poll,
And is fond of a babel
And upsets a table
Or temper, and does not think twice—
But she's nice;
Though you never saw tantrums like hers out of fable
And not without vice;
She is always unstable,
But then she's a woman and never was ice.

Tiny "Doll" will go souse into any mad mess,
For she lives in a racket and flutter
And utter
Contempt of such trifles as customs and dress;
And her course is not humble
Like sinners, who stumble
And bother with penitent pains;
And her stains
Come more kindly to her, from too many a tumble
In pestilent drains,
At which good people grumble
And leave—till the next dirty scandal complains.

Daring "Doll" is a brick in the moment of need,
She is Irish and fond of a shindy
And windy
Herself, in her ways and her Donnibrooke creed;
In the stormiest weather,
And light as a feather
She flies when the stones are about—
She steps out,
And her tongue does away with propriety's tether;
She despises a clout
Of rude stick or rough leather,
Like a pètrél she rides on the hubbub and rout.

Tricksy "Doll" is a darling, a great human love
 On her pale pretty cheeks paints its flushes
 And rushes
 To eye and red lip, and enwraps like a glove—
 Yes, as warmly and tightly,
 Whether wrongly or rightly,
 When you once touch her sensitive part—
 She has heart;
 And that love in her sordid career burns more brightly
 Than candles of art,
 Like a star that beams nightly
 On litter and leavings of mud and of dirt.

PRETTY PRISS.

Pretty Priss, pretty Priss
 Takes a coin or a kiss
 Like a lady and thanks you as well,
 She is good for a fight,
 She is good for a night
 And would dance like an angel to hell.
 She may have naughty tricks,
 But she never pretends
 To be better than others or worse;
 She will give you fair play
 Or the time of the day,
 If desired, and won't stick at a price.

 Pretty Priss, pretty Priss
 Deems a music-hall life,
 And for such her spare clothes are made
 In her ribbons and tags
 And unspeakable rags,
 She would like to perform on the stage,
 Though she stumbles and trips,
 Still when asked she prays,
 With devotion becoming to her;
 And the God who's our kin
 Deeper looks than the skin,
 And finds pardon for pussies who err.

Pretty Priss, pretty Priss,
Takes no weather amiss,
And all burdens upon her sit light ;
Be it famine or frost,
Yet she counts not the cost,
And is certain the end will come right.
They may praise her or scold,
Give a shilling or gold,
Or presume on their riches to strike ;
For the pleasure or pain
She is ready again,
And receives every windfall alike.

Pretty Priss, pretty Priss,
Do not reckon on this—
That your spirits will never run down,
And your beauty won't fade
In the gaslight and shade,
If you now are so bonny and brown.
But I feel very sure,
No misfortune will cure
You of follies like those of the past ;
That your life will be short,
Kisses, ribbons and sport,
You'll be pretty and bold to the last.

QUEEN "BABY."

My dear duchess, it may be
You have not seen "Baby,"
The beauty who reigns in the slums ;
Though her hair is her crown,
And all tattered her gown,
And she still goes on sucking her thumbs.
She is tidy and trim for a Whitechapel child,
And her tangles at least are her own ;
She has stains on her hands, but are you not defil'd,
If the rottenness yet is not known ?

From the garbage of gutter life bursts no white blossom,
Though her blemish lies most on the face ;
What is soil on the body to soil in the bosom,
Covered over with jewels and lace ?

Keep your feathers, fine gaby,
But I prefer " Baby,"
With all her rough manners and rags ;
She has temper no doubt,
And it often flames out,
But in sympathy *she* never lags.
O she swears like a trooper, I cannot deny,
And her speech is not drawing-room slang ;
But the danger you scuttle from she would defy
And say straight to the devil, go hang.
But yet somehow the oaths on those ripe lips of cherry
Have a kind of propriety tone,
As the thorns that protect the wild red winter berry
As it shivers, cold, naked, alone.

And if rod to belay be
In pickle for " Baby,"
She stands undefended, unarmed,
Save by shrewd native wit
And a tongue that can hit,
With a heart that is never alarmed.
For the gold is not all on that tumbled fair thatch
Streaming over the earnest gray eyes,
Hardly hiding the scar of the eloquent scratch,
And deep down in her nature it lies.
Do not ask me too closely the source of her living,
Remember her home is the slums,
She is true to her light, she is frank and forgiving
In that air that befogs and benumbs.

Truths as simple as A B
Are unknown to " Baby,"
Yet *she* wants no crutches or nurse,
And secure as a Guef
Governs all but herself,
Without laws or police or a purse.

Ready tact, the right word, an invincible will,
And a knowledge of neighbours' weak points,
Give a power and throne that no monarch could fill
Whom a grand coronation anoints.
For her spirit admits of no rival, and truckles
To no force—from no tyranny swerves,
While at times and indeed she can use her brown
knuckles
In a fashion to scare timid nerves.

BIG BELL.

They are rather afraid of Big Bell
And her bouncing,
Though the reason is simple and easy to tell—
She has given to many a bully a trouncing ;
And she lays it on thick
With a broomstick or brick,
Or whatever comes handy—
See her last victim, " Sandy !"
She is fond of the glass and a jolly good fling
In the Whitechapel gutter,
With her hiccough and stutter—
That voluminous wench, that voluptuous Thing !
She is blowsy of features—Big Bell,
They look scarlet
When she lurches along like a ship in a swell,
Bearing down and full sail on some cowardly varlet,
With her lolloping tread
That would waken the dead,
From the garish gas hot-house
Of the gin-reeking pot-house ;
Ah, I pity the craven who crosses her then,
On the road or her doorsill ;
He is just a mere morsel,
For that ogress who mocks at a dozen such men.

Never bonnet was worn by Big Bell,
 She despises
 Your tame fashions, and rolls on unhatted to hell,
 In her own rough-and-tumble undress that surprises ;
 Her great shoes do not pair,
 And around her black hair
 With its natural glossing
 And tempestuous tossing
 She has sometimes been known to disport a red shawl ;
 And indeed her bare bosom
 Often flares a flame blossom,
 Unconcealed, and would shock Mistress Grundy and all.
 But a tender heart still has Big Bell,
 And she gathers
 In its compass lost dogs and stray cats, and as well
 Every child she finds crying she mothers and fathers ;
 For the dirtiest brat
 With its head like a mat,
 She would spend and quite willing,
 Her last loaf or last shilling.
 But whenever she tramps on the warpath of drink
 Gloomng darker than Hindoos,
 Neighbours shut up their windows
 While they fasten their doors and away from her slink.

— — —
 LUCE.

Jolly Luce, better known as the mother of Siss,
 Is delightfully human,
 The big apple-woman
 Whose fruit in the season you hardly could miss ;
 She has many a basket
 And one roomy stall,
 Though her figure may mask it
 If ever you call.
 Her umbrageous proportions are landmarks to see
 And to fashion your course,
 Or a friendly resource—
 But, when signals mark danger, a foreland to flee.

There's a husband about, a promoter of fears
And rude temper and tattle,
With bloodshed and battle,
Who seems always "wanted" and seldom appears.
He has troublesome yearnings
For oysters and stout,
And is dead on her earnings
When Law lets him out.
But big Luce has a method and arm of her own
And is awkward to face,
Like a bear's rough embrace,
Till the devil is laid and the tempest is blown.

O big Luce has a spirit as large as her frame
And a proper affection,
With kind recollection
Of others if down on their luck or in shame.
Are you short of a shilling,
Or faint for a feed?
She is never unwilling,
To lend what you need.
If a neighbour is sick or a child seeks a rest,
She is foremost of all
And at ev'ry one's call,
And would gather the world on her infinite breast.
But the "apple" (she says) "of her eye" is bright Siss—
Yes, for *her* she keeps scraping
And screwing, and shaping
Her efforts, that *she* may have plenty and bliss.
So big Luce goes on trudging
From morning to night,
And except in her drudging
Scarce finds a delight.
And the seasons go out and the seasons come in
With their changes and chimes,
And are just working times
Only ending again the same round to begin.

"BUB."

She is lissom and sprightly
And eager for chat,
While she hops about lightly
And never grows fat ;
She's the age of most people, but has not a name
That a parent would hit
On or parson deem fit,
Yet it was not her choosing and *she's* not to blame ;
As a butterfly often springs out of a grub,
So she flashes about in the gaudiest dresses
With scintillant tresses,
Though nicknamed mere "Bub."

In all winds and all weathers
She fancies a fling,
And you see her fine feathers
In every good thing ;
At a feast or a funeral, quarrel or spree,
In the daytime or night
She takes equal delight,
And with each as it comes is prepared to agree ;
She can carry her bottle and bear a rough rub
With the stoutest, and likes at your cost to get mellow,
Though *her* hair is yellow
And *she* is plain "Bub."

But she's dismal when sober
And haunted with fears,
And then looks like October
In red leaves and tears ;
But a pull at the poison will soon set her up
From her querulous heap,
And the laughs will leap
Once again as she flies to the kiss or the cup ;
Then her mirth is too noisy for neighbours to snub,
And she reads with an infinite zest the dark riddle
Of life to the fiddle,
Dear bibulous "Bub."

She is leggy and limber
 And fond of a dance,
 As if cork were her timber
 And days all romance;
 But she keeps a warm corner at heart for the Jews
 With their noses and bags
 And researches in rags,
 And for one half a week she held temperate views;
 Yes, for him like the cynic she lived in a tub,
 Till at least in an hour of presumptuous boasting
 She thought just of toasting
 Her goodness—poor "Bub."

"OLE GRAN."

This is funny "Ole Gran,"
 A quaint Whitechapel figure
 Composed on a plan
 Of old rags and all rigour;
 And mouldy with weather and lichen'd bytime
 To a singular shape,
 And half woman, half ape,
 With suspicions of moss and a coating of grime;
 She is threadbare and thrifty,
 And numbers twice fifty
 Long years and can still pick her oakum and thief—
 So *they* say, and I think I can almost believe.
 Here's a health to "Ole Gran,"
 And a fig for aspersions!
 She gets what she can,
 And will have her diversions.
 If *she* holds the *meum* and *teum* are one,
 And the busy who toil
 Are preserved for her spoil,
 She does only what titled defrauders have done;
 And society brought her
 To this, and mistaught her—
 It pushed her along this deplorable way;
 And yet now we would grumble, at what we must pay.

I wont bother "Ole Gran"
With proprieties' wishes,
If into her pan
She pops *my* loaves and fishes;
She is welcome to take of my margin and live
On my leavings and pence,
And to break through the fence
Of my sound legal rights—and I freely forgive;
Her dim doddering paces
And crusty grimaces,
Appeal to my love more than satin and silk,
And if *I* enjoy cream, *she* may have the skim milk.
Others threaten "Ole Gran"
With policemen and such,
And your drawing-room man
Would recoil from her touch;
Prigs allege she's unpleasant to nose and to eye,
And is evil in look,
Yet she fills up a nook
In my heart, and the bearings of earth and the sky;
As the blight on a meadow,
She fits in the shadow
Of life, and has somewhere her own proper place,
Which is part of one whole, and as needful as grace.

"AUNTIE."

Little hunchy-backed "Auntie," incongruous elf,
Has had never a foe in the world but herself,
And the terrible drink
With its adamant link;
See, she stands not four feet in her highest-heeled boots
By some very long inches,
And bad habit pinches
Her smaller, and stops any chance of new shoots
Or a healthier growing;
For all the fresh life,
That would feed her, goes flowing
In liquor and strife.

But yet "Auntie" is wiser than all the wise men,
And she carries a bottle of ink and a pen
And can scribble (when paid)
For a man or a maid

The most marvellous letters of love without flaw ;
O her hand seems to caper
And flourish on paper,
Till ignorant people regard her with awe ;
And her moderate charges
Surprise, though a verse
Or two added enlarges
Her claims on your purse.

Wretched wee wrinkled "Auntie" is shaped like a bird
With its plumage all ruffled and temper all stirr'd,
With a long hooky beak,
And looks washy and weak ;
While her spirit and body refuse to be friends,
For the one is too active
And one too contractive,
And each goes about the most opposite ends ;
So I think her big nature
Is in the wrong house,
That would suit with its stature
A midge or a mouse.

Dowdy draggle-tailed "Auntie" has one funny craze,
An aversion for children—she shrinks from their gaze,
And would fly any street
To escape their young feet ;
For when first to Whitechapel she drifted, I know,
With her withered and stunted
Poor frame, she was hunted
By urchins with mud and with many a blow.
And those terors yet tarry
Within her scared eyes,
And their brand she will carry
To death's dark Assize.

MOTHER MOG.

Mother Mog has a kindly
Compassionate brow,
If she moves about blindly
With suffering now ;
Though she never was married,
Her children are scores,
On her broad bosom carried—
And babes she adores.
Ah, the young and uncared for and helpless for miles,
Ev'ry cat, ev'ry dog,
Know the light of the blessing and warmth of the smiles
Of the good Mother Mog.

Mother Mog was thrown early
Adrift on the street,
In the fierce hurly-burly
And fever of feet ;
But the sin and the sorrow
Oped fountains of love
In her heart, and a morrow
Of mercy above.
She possessed not one gift but a beautiful soul,
And that pestilent Bog
Which had sucked down whole worlds in its slimy
control
Could not snare Mother Mog.

Mother Mog has the pureness
Which comes from the heart,
And that gives her secureness
When iron bolts part ;
For her innocent pity
Looks out on the pall
Of that terrible City,
And suffers for all.
But still nothing can stay her or stumble her path,
Neither lion nor log ;
And she walks yet unsinged in the furnace of wrath—
Simple sweet Mother Mog.

Mother Mog has no learning,
To teach her the truth,
But her mind feels the yearning
Of infinite youth ;
And though more than twice thirty
Her nature is green,
And if awkward and dirty
She moves like a Queen.
She's a copy of Christ, and would die for the sin,
That we flatter or flog ;
And I here raise my hat to the angel, within
The poor plain Mother Mog.

FAN.

Frisky Fan
Has a wonderful eye for a man,
And for brothers ;
It's odd how they multiply fast,
And the dearest of course is the freshest and last ;
Unlike others,
She's never content with one string
And would take all the sex cuddled under her wing,
She is fair and fifteen although fifty in vice
And in folly,
A born flirt to tempt and entice
And alone has been seen to flirt hard with a "dolly."
Naughty Fan
Has fled long from Society's ban,
Though still tender
Of age, and is seasoned in sin
From example and gentlemen's treating and gin—
You can't mend her ;
Her manners are shocking, and tracts
Only send her off swearing to uglier acts.
Still her face keeps its infantine look, though her heart
Is as blighted
As harridans' hawked on the mart—
To the devil for years she has truly been plighted.

Dressy Fan
Thinks costume is the only good plan,
For young ladies ;
She'd sell her own soul with delight
For a pretty pink frock, if she supped the same night
Down in Hades ;
She'd worry a hat from a Jew,
And no second hand slop but smart-ribboned and new.
Yes, her taste is not bad, and your elegant dames
With their varnish
Who call her the vilest of names,
Yet look vulgar to her with so little to garnish.
Easy Fan
Never troubled, since once she began,
About morals ;
To her they are not for the poor,
And seem just like the paint on a nobleman's door,
Or the corals
That hang around duchesses' throats,
Who know nothing (in public) of rakes and wild oats.
But then *she* with her weakness would not hurt a fly,
Nor give sections
Of life to each claim, all awry ;
She is perfect at least in her mere imperfections.

OUR SAL.

She is little but talking and tatters
And oaths,
In her clothes
That for her are too big and strange matters,
And tied up with string
Just to keep out the weather,
Though scarcely they cling
In their fragments together :
Ah, a funny old gal
But at bottom a brick
Is our Sal,
If she seems such a cussed queer stick.

Through the courts of the Gentiles and Jewry
 She tears,
 When she swears
And breaks out in her petticoat fury ;
 She's grayhaired and grim,
 Draggle-tailed and a Tartar—
 God have mercy on *him*
 She selects as a martyr !
 But, if wanted a pal
 In a moment of need,
 Try our Sal
Whom I warrant a stunner indeed.

You may sometimes see *her* at a crossing
 In mire,
 All on fire
For your alms that she seeks without glossing ;
 Thin, threadbare and gaunt,
 With her stertorous stammer,
 She parries a taunt
 By an oath like a hammer ;
 She must live, and she shall
 Though by begging and luck,
 For our Sal
Has a place upon earth like the muck.

The policemen are shy of her bitter
 Plain speech,
 And they each
Find a quieter neighbourhood fitter ;
 But trust me, her lips
 Can frame womanly blessings,
 And souls in eclipse
 Often feel her caressings.
 Valeat quantum val. !
 But beneath the top layer
 Of our Sal,
You may dig down to something like prayer.

"WICKED BET."

Don't you know "Wicked Bet"
 With her forehead of brass,
 And her sturdy
 Loud wordy
 Delight in a "wet"
 And a bibulous yarn to each sociable glass,
 At the neighbouring tavern,
 With a mouth like a cavern?
 And with red rheumy eyes
 Now in rollicking leer,
 Now in savage surprise,
 Blinking over her beer.

You must mark "Wicked Bet"
 And the shadow we shun
 Past enduring,
 Procuring
 Sweet souls that are let,
 And her black coruscations of crapulous fun;
 Ah, I think Adam's apple
 Came back to Whitechapel;
 While *she* by her art,
 With a living to make,
 Plays the infamous part
 Of the damnable Snake.

Just observe "Wicked Bet"
 As she watches her prey,
 Like a spider
 Beside her
 Pretending to pet;
 If girls fall in her clutches, all hopeless are they;
 For she carefully angles
 And traps them in tangles
 Of promises fair,
 If they fidget or pout;
 Till they find in despair
 That they cannot get out.

Though she is "Wicked Bet,"
A noctivagous curse,
With her easy
And greasy
Devices to get
Her serpent constrictions round person and purse ;
If she certainly trundles
Her feminine bundles,
Soul, body, to hell ;
Yet she offers good pay,
She goes with them as well
And makes pleasant the way.

SUE.

I like Sue,
And her blue
Pretty eyes with their passion ;
And the shape of her shoulders and waist's finer fashion
To which none could object,
Which you would not expect
In a Whitechapel gal under tatters and tears,
With the slough of the slums
And the stainings and crumbs
Which as witness to recent debauches she bears ;
Yet she's natty,
And chatty.
I like Sue,
She is true
And as tender as darlings
Who herd like the pigs and must scavenge like starlings
For a meal, as they may,
From the dustbin or way
That is footed by poor men and wheeled o'er by rich ;
Ah, she has not your pride,
And the dirt is outside
And not carved into idols and throned on a niche ;
She's, if vicious,
Delicious.



I like Sue,
And the hue
Of her shaded brown tresses,
And her wondering looks and her baby addresses ;
While the colour lies fresh
On her healthy young flesh,
All in spite of the spots which would quickly rub off,
As the bloom makes its nest
In the rose's red breast ;
It wears better than *rouge*, lady, though you may scoff ;
She is ruddy,
If muddy.

I like Sue,
For the clue
That she gives to old fountains,
First principles sure and sublime as the mountains ;
O she carries me back
To the earliest track,
And behind this pale mumming and falsehood and dearth ;
While she breathes of the soil
And the sweetness of toil,
And the hand of the Maker and mothering Earth ;
Yes, at twenty
That's plenty.

JOAN.

Joan is yellow
And mellow,
As ripe as a nut,
Though a lazy great drab and a deuce of a slut ;
Far too fond of her snooze
And unspeakable bed,
And addicted to booze
When her children want bread.
From that lavish rotundity
Hardly her choice,
Out of awful profundity
Comes a male voice.

Joan's a pattern
True slattern
Of rude slummy type,
For she loves a cigar and enjoys her black pipe ;
Like a tigress she grips
With her passion her man,
And her sensual lips
Have the fleshliest plan ;
And as snuff she's no laggard
Nor slow at a song—
She prefers " Irish blackguard,"
And both of them strong.

She's a model
To waddle,
Her margin is such,
Though she likes the gin-bottle to serve as a crutch ;
And her wild tawny hair,
Tumbles over her face ;
And you well might despair,
In her python's embrace ;
If you came to collision
Or warmer caress,
You would need a decision
That few men possess.

Joan's no stranger
To danger,
She laughs it to scorn,
And the bully to frighten her has not been born ;
With her muscular arms
And her terrible tramp,
When excited, her charms
Have an Amazon stamp ;
Then its idle your wooing
And certain your fall,
She must burst and boohooing
Makes ninepins of all.

OLD MEG.

Many call her the "Granny"
And think her a witch
In their hearts, and uncanny
And cold is her scritch—
When she's crossed or the liquor has fuddled her brains,
And her toothless gums tattle
And bones seem to rattle
From dolorous rust like a skeleton's chains;
She is hungry and haggard, Old Meg,
And she lurches
With doubtful researches,
On one wooden leg.

You may see her on crutches
That poke into drains,
And explore rabbit hutches
Regardless of stains;
Ah, she rakes up the dung heap and scatters the dust,
Or the refuse of brewers
And garbage of sewers,
For the maggoty offal and filthiest crust;
For she cannot be dainty, Old Meg,
And goes lonely
Through life, and is only
A scavenger's peg.

Yes, a peg for the hanging
Of rubbish and tins,
And old bottles whose clanging
Performs on her shins;
Over each bushy eyebrow lies beetling a mole;
She is tenth in one attic,
And drags her rheumatic
Pinched frame every night to that leperous hole;
She appears badly cobbled (Old Meg)
Of odd fractions,
And all her strange actions
Agree but to beg.

And I doubt if a sinner
 Was ever more sunk
 And as mouldy or thinner
 Or happier drunk ;
 What she eats must be little, she never buys bread,
 And is pleased just with pickings
 Of pavements and lickings
 Of bones from which sensible dogs turn their head ;
 She's a desperate drinker, Old Meg,
 For her fancies
 And highest romances
 Transcend not the keg.

MAD JANE.

I've a sneaking respect for " Mad Jane "
 And her mission,
 Which veers like a vane
 With the chapel's last fission ;
 For, though filthy, untrue,
 And unchaste as the rest,
 With light fingers for all that may chance to accrue,
 There's a spark of religion down in her dim breast ;
 Ah, she knows she's a desperate sinner—
 Mere dregs,
 But her legs
 Take her faster to sermons than dinner.
 She appears out of place, poor " Mad Jane,"
 In that quarter
 Of blackness and bane,
 Like a fish out of water ;
 Her quavering voice
 Can fling curses about,
 And she does, but she vastly prefers to rejoice
 With the hymn-book she never was once seen without ;
 And it is not all humbug and shamming,
 I know,
 If her flow
 Of strong words takes so kindly to damning.

There's a burden that rests on "Mad Jane,"
And a story
Like a long crooked lane,
To help people to glory;
And when tipsy she yet
Is inspired by that zeal,
And that passion consuming she cannot forget
With its terrible calling she will not conceal;
With her menacing arm like a prophet
She raves,
Till the graves
Might awaken—and souls down in Tophet.
She is grey and dishevelled, "Mad Jane,"
And so bony;
Her spirits can't wane,
With the cup as her crony;
When she stutters and storms
"Hallelujah" I join,
And I think of repentance and turn to reforms,
While my hands in my coat grope about for a coin;
Though next minute the preacher may stumble
And flop,
From a drop
Just too much, yet I go away humble.

FLO.

In her face she is merry
And brown as a berry,
But not
In the heart that is withered and worn
And so fretted away, by the thorn
And the spot
Of the infamous lot
That has never a morn;
If at times in the drought of her trials and troubles,
Like a spring in the desert her young spirit bubbles;
Though the fault of poor Flo
Is, she cannot say *no*.

I can see rarest beauty
In striving at duty,
 Through rags
Of the Pariah outcast and lone
With a pillow of straw or a stone,
 And in hags
Wrecked on pitiless crags
And the law's cruel throne ;
And I mark in this plaything of wind and the weather,
Mere weakness (not wickedness) tost as a feather ;
 The mischief in Flo
Is above, not below.

She is fickle and fragile,
A gipsy, and agile
 Of limb
Like a graceful and sinuous pard ;
Though her forehead shows years have been hard
 And no whim,
But as breakers to swim
In and leaving her scarr'd ;
While her coral lips often turn weary and white,
And are puckered with care and the world's coward
 spite ;
But a hero is Flo,
Whatsoever blasts blow.

She has toppled and tumbled,
And staggered and stumbled
 In strife,
And then risen up laughing through tears
In the shadow of death and its fears,
 When its knife
Has been stabbing her life
And her thoughts have been spears ;
But in teeth of her torturing needs for the day,
From the darkness and doom comes redeeming a ray,
And on down-trodden Flo
Filters some of its glow.

MAUD.

Dainty delicate Maud
 Would step over a puddle,
 And hates like sheer poison a bother or muddle,
 Though she's (I confess) a mere elegant fraud;
 But in rainy bad weather,
 She fears to wet leather;
 You see her most carefully picking her way
 Like a cat on a wall that is pointed with glass,
 While the rough neighbours pass
 Plump in mud and the clay,
 With her Pharisee's skirt
 Lifted up from the dirt.

Dainty delicate Maud
 Is so only in features
 And form, like those monstrous and fabulous creatures
 That are dragons behind, and her nature is bawd;
 But if now lost and shady,
 She was once a fine lady
 And drove in her carriage like you in the Park,
 Or (as now) drawled in icy impertinent tones
 Scurvy scandal of thrones
 And transgressed in the dark—
 But averted her face,
 From stark open disgrace.

Dainty delicate Maud
 Had an eye for a jewel,
 And the glimpse of a diamond served but as fuel
 To thievish desires—and she still loves a gawd—
 Till she stooped to low stealing,
 And hurt beyond healing;
 And caught she sank deeper and deeper in mire,
 While she drowned in the cup the last feelings of shame
 At the brand on her name
 Like the burning of fire;
 And hope's portal slamm'd
 On her, heedless and damn'd.

Dainty delicate Maud
With her eyes' jetty lashes,
Dreads more the wet pavement and possible splashes
Than staring dishonour, and now is not aw'd
By the fretting of evil
Like moth or the weevil;
She is clean in her person, and that is a boon,
And her frocks are in fashion and always a fit;
Like a dead silver moon,
Where as cerements sit
Pretty patterns of cloud,
And she carries her shroud.

POLL.

Poll believes she is pretty,
And tosses her jetty
Smooth locks in the sauciest Whitechapel way;
Who shall say
To her nay,
When she glances with joking
Sly mischief and mouth that is red and provoking,
In garments of wonderful soiled disarray?
All your scruples she thinks
Are mere squeamish pretence,
And excuses the boldest offence
When she drinks.
Poll I know is not steady,
And always was ready
For romping or crime with an equal address,
To transgress
Or confess:
She is given to smiling
At sins that you, madam, would not find beguiling
And spends her whole time betwixt cup and caress;
But she takes such delight
If she chooses to err,
That the foulest of failings in *her*
Appear right.

Poll is cheap but as charming,
 And some deem alarming
 When once she has fairly made up her gay mind ;
 Then like wind
 She is blind
 To the biggest obstruction,
 And hurries along with a laugh to destruction
 With passion and purpose no laws yet can bind ;
 But a method peeps out
 From her maddest display,
 And she knows when its best to delay
 Or to pout.

Poll is company pleasant,
 When no one is present
 But you and herself and you bow to her will,
 Nor think ill
 Of her bill
 Which is shamefully heavy,
 And sums all she sees or resolves she can levy
 From weakness or fear that is stupid and still.
 But her person has points,
 And in rags is more blest
 Than the figure which rank may invest
 And anoints.

EPILOGUE.

Now the pick of the Whitechapel flowers
 Here are faithfully drawn,
 As they bloom in Tartarean bowers,
 Where none ever sees Dawn ;
 Here the cream of the loafers and laggards,
 And the corner boys, bullies and blackguards,
 With the true slummy taint,
 In their own heathen paint,
 Is portrayed by the hand of affection
 And the heart that knows well,
 They could move earth as hell—
 If they had but the proper direction.

Fulfilled in me yet may not be my own,
And wrought by me is yet to me unknown.
But this I know, the purpose of the plan
Which blossoms from my will, with rainbow span
Of splendid words, to build a worthy dome
For Him who hitherto has found no home
On earth or sea in miracle of art,
Nor in the praises of one perfect heart,
And all unhoused by sunshine or by shade
Still wanders homeless through the world He made,
And though awhile He lodged in Mary's womb
His universe now gives Him but a tomb.
And thus I build, or Somewhat builds through me
Of all past sorrows and new bliss to be,
In words of worship and rock-hewn romance
The symmetry and solemn circumstance
Of a proportioned temple pure and meet
Where He may pause and rest His passing feet,
With glamoured windows glimpsing forth blue skies
And blood-red passions and Christophanies.
Necessity lies on me and my arm,
That chisels here a face and there the charm
Of shy sweet shoulders rising warm and white
From seas of purple, calm and infinite,
Beneath a yellow moon hung large and low
Where never sunbeams walk or breezes blow ;
Then a young head with sad and solemn brow
Bent by the awful burden of the vow
Of ages past the orb of earthly aid,
With hecatombs of helpless lives unpaid ;
And then the rush of aimless wings, that fly
For ever through a lost eternity.
Fate holds my hand with iron will, and paints
No dying glory round the dying saints
Who meet the bier as bridal kisses, lone
But strong as figures wrought of rugged stone ;
And writes, in flame and tempest and hot tears,
The insufferable message of the years.
I mark the glimmer of the pearly morn,
And at my heart the fretting of the thorn

I feel, who know not whither I must wend
Whirled to some dark inevitable end.
I lie upon the naked breasts of fire
Of palpitating Nature, my desire
And my delight, and drinking of those wells
I gather of the spirit of all spells
And mysteries, and mixed with her I burn
In the same fount that is the funeral urn
And cradle of the worlds, where thoughts and things
Arise and melt in varied vanishings
Through birth and death. By many a shadowed shoal
I drift to some unutterable goal,
That is the starting of yet other strife
Afar in other lands and other life.
But still I seek the beautiful, the best,
And gather precious stones and red unrest
Of blushing poppies kneeling on the sod
That hang their faces down before their God,
The galaxy of grapes, the silver spume
Tost by dim waves on shores of faint perfume,
Soft tresses twined like snakes in golden braids
And mocking scarlet lips of lily maids,
White blossoms murmuring low to secret chimes,
All fruits and fairness of all spheres and times,
And silences and songs together bound
By rills of praise that gush from holy ground;
To clothe, in colours of the earth and sky,
The houseless Presence of Divinity.
And so I build, held by no mortal hand,
A frescoed fane that stayed in prayer may stand
A little space and be a robe inspired
By One who treads the earth yet unattired
And outcast, if at length I may be clothed
Myself with Love to whom I was betrothed,
Since first I heard the bitter cry of Him
Disowned by earth left therefore lost and dim.
And so I lay the polished line on line,
Stanza on stanza cut of shade and shine,
Poem on poem bodied out of thought,
And book on book in one grand temple wrought

With radiant moulding to its columned height,
Whose corridors are fire and dew and light.
Each verse in His great vesture is a stone,
Or but the rubbish cast beneath His throne
For its foundation, every word fits in
And finds some part of His dear beauty kin.
The spider spinning gossamers, the leaf
Unfolding to the sun, the tawny sheaf
With drooping head, the dew that breaks the cloud,
The baby bursting from the womb, the proud
Confession of pure lips that part with bliss
In the red rapture of the first love kiss,
The blush on virgin cheek of girl or grape,
The tears of love that from the heart escape
Scarcely, the noontide chant of larks, the strong
Free buffet of the breeze, the evensong
Of passing souls that through a door of flame
And faith step from their outworn earthly frame
Into the liberty of larger being — all,
Like me in measure do obey the call
To work, which binds us in a common guild,
And by the same grand impulse wafted build
The web or wonder of a painted shrine,
To make this mortal dwelling-house divine.
And thus I own the universal breath
Of passion, shaping out of life and death
My duty to the God I only know
And touch in toil that trembles in His glow,
Shed on the castled pile and baby's whim ;
And labour on, and stretch blind hands to Him.
But still I see, though with the inward eye,
The hidden gleam of a theophany
In every little speck of space or large
Event of many sides without a marge
Or measure, in the worm's obscure intents,
As in the upheaval of the continents ;
And still I know I am most surely led
By devious dusky roads, where blood is shed
And horrors hang, to a predestined port
For which no voyage may be smooth and short

Or free from perils. So I sail and sing
Down life's dark river, as I strike the string
Of this impassioned lute, though leaving *here*
An altar light that gilds the atmosphere
Of some torn bosom, *there* a blessed thought
Which scatters roses on rough paths unsought.
The night is not all night, if thorny whin
And stabbing stones do mock me ; for within
Wavers the troubled dawn of truer day ;
While hours have wings and bosoms much to say,
That yet cannot be said unless in song—
When one small word might do the Maker wrong,
For whom with verse on verse I dimly raise
My humble house whose only robe is praise.
And still I feel the swathing of a Love
That works inside my being, not above,
Though far beyond my efforts blind and rude,
In all the passion of its plenitude
And awfulness of pure perfection, Light
Invisible, and armed with maiden might
Of dew and bloom and tenderness and power,
The gold on breasts of butterfly and flower,
The strongest frailty and the flame that tries
And all the holy sweet virginities ;
A verity of vastness, and a grace
More than the grandeur of a woman's face
Just bathed in heaven and fresh from that white fount
Where spirit talks with spirit on the Mount ;
A fearful beauty that is Life, a spell
Of unimagined peace, ineffable ;
If I but catch mere glimpses of the wave
That rolls alike through cradles and the grave
And thrills through all with pulse of equal sweep,
Blue gardens of the air, dark gates of sleep.
I offer no divided love, I give
Myself, my heart, my hope whereby I live.
Thus driven by soft Omnipotence I dip
My pen in dreams, and slake my thirsty lip
With draughts of moonlight music and the night,
And snare the starbeams ere they can take flight ;

While with my lonely heart I walk at will
And plan new worlds and build and babble still,
A child and yet a man, a penitent—
And yet a pardoned soul, an instrument
Of many strings whereon each passing air
Awakes a note of something fond and fair,
For dear dread God who shadows what must be
And through the silence lays bright hands on me.

FINIS.



PRESS NOTICES, ETC.

"CONFESSIONS OF A POET,"

5s. WITH PORTRAIT,

BY "F. HARALD WILLIAMS"

(Old Tonbridgian),

Published by HUTCHINSON & Co., 84, Paternoster Row.

See Vol. 9 of "Poets and Poetry of the Century," p. 574 to 584.

Sir Lewis Morris says of the "Confessions"—"With an original method, you combine a very remarkable mastery of metre and rhyme. I am sure much of your work is deserving of far more notice and higher praise even than that which it has received."

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